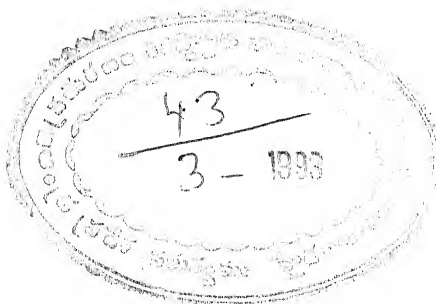


SRI KALAHASTI EASWARA MAHIMA



By
PAVANI SITARAMIAH

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॥ श्री शृङ्गेरी श्रीजगद्गुरुमहासंस्थानम् ॥



श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य पदवाक्यप्रमाणपारावारपारीण यमनियमासन-
प्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाभ्यासनममाभ्यष्टाङ्गयोगानुष्ठाननिष्ठ तपश्चक्रवर्त्यनाथविच्छिन्न
श्रीशङ्कराचार्यगुरुपरम्पराप्राप्त पद्धर्शनस्थापनाचार्य व्याख्यानमिहासनाधीश्वर सकल
निगमागमसारहृदय सांख्यत्रयप्रतिपादक वेदिकमार्गप्रवर्तक सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रादिराजधानी-
विद्यानगरमहाराजधानीकणाटकमिहामनप्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य श्रीमद्राजाधिगजगुरुभूषणडला-
चार्य ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरवर्गाधीश्वर तुङ्गभद्रातीर्थवासी श्रीमद्विद्याशङ्करपादपद्यागधक श्रीजगद्गुरु
श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थस्वामिशुक्करकमलसञ्ज्ञात

॥ श्री जगद्गुरु शृङ्गेरी श्रीमद्भारतीतीर्थस्वामिभिः ॥

अस्मदत्यन्त प्रियशिष्य पवान् सीतारामस्य त्वयै नारायणस्मरणपूर्वकं
विरचिता आशिष स्वमुत्सन्तु।

पवित्रैस्मिन् भारते देशे सन्ति नैकानि क्षेत्राणि यत्र भगवान् लिङ्गायात्मना
विराजमानः लोकान् अनुगृह्णान् वरिवर्णिनीरूपोऽपि भगवान् साधकानुगृहाय बहूनि
रूपाणि स्वीकरोतीति शास्त्रमयादि। तत्र भगवान् परमाश्विनः लिङ्गरूपेण अनेकेषु
क्षेत्रेषु विराजते। तदादृशेषु क्षेत्रेषु श्रीकालहस्ति नामकं क्षेत्रं अन्यतममास्ते। क्षेत्र-
स्यास्य मस्तिमा पुराणीषु दिस्तरेण। प्रतिपादितः। तं मोक्षदानं जनान् अवबोधयितुं
श्रीकालहस्ति स्थलमाहात्म्यनामकः कश्चन ग्रन्थः आन्ध्रभाषायां प्रकटोक्तः आसीत्।
तं च ग्रन्थं भवान् आङ्गलभाषया अनुध प्रकाशयितुं प्रयत्नं करोति विदित्वा। मोदामहे।

अयं ग्रन्थः भक्तजनानां उपकारको मुखात् मन्त्रश्च मन्त्रः कृपया श्रियांसि
समस्तनुतामिति आशास्महे।

यात्रास्थानम्- मुम्बई

हस्त नारायणस्मरणम्

आर्गास वैशाखकृष्ण षाडशी

भाद्रपदशरः २६ - ५ - ६२



KANCHI AND KALAHASTI

The ancient Pallava Kingdom was adorned with several grand temples dedicated to Siva. Among them the temples associated with the prime elements of Earth (Pridvi) and Air (Vayu) located at Kanchi and Kalahasti are outstanding monuments of sculpture and architecture commanding implicit devotion.

Many of the great Nayanmars have praised Siva in these places in many of their devotional songs. The poet Muka, after regaining the power of speech by the grace of the Devi in these places, has composed hundreds of Slokas in praise of Her. Adi Sankara established Kamakoti Peetam at Kanchi and Jalandhara Peetam at Kalahasti.

In recent times His Holiness Paramacharya Chandra Sekhara Saraswati Swamigal conducted Agama Sadas at Kalahasti and identified a number of idols and deciphered many ancient inscriptions. Recognising the spiritual potency of this place he established a home for the aged, which is being ably managed by Rotarian Sri.N.R. Das. H.H. Sri.Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal, besides renovating a number of temples, has established another such home near Kanchi. The young Swami Sri. Vijayendra Saraswathi is a tower of inspiration.

In all humility I pay my obeisance to these three Acharyas of Kanchi and express my gratitude to Sri.N.R. Das for encouraging me to undertake the task.

- Pavani Sitaramiah

Dr. Sarvepalli Gopal

"Girija"

97, Radhakrishnan Salai,
Mylapore,
Madras - 600 004

Foreword

India abounds with Oral traditions and many of these cling to our ancient temples. The mixture of fact, legend and fantasy is of fascinating interest to students of our social and cultural history. Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh has for long years drawn pilgrims from various parts of the country and its story has lived on their lips. Now Shri Pavani Sitaramiah has recounted it in these pages with knowledge and devotion. It will be of interest to many and especially to those who journey to Kalahasti.

S. Gopal

ANJALI

I prostrate before Sri Gnanaprasunamba sameta Sri Kalahasteeswara and Sri Subhagamba sameta Sri Vijayeswara (Ardhanareswara) the dynamic power behind my endeavour.

I bow down before Sri Balaji Venkateswara and acknowledge with thanks the grant of Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only) by Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam, Tirupathi under their scheme of Aid to Authors - financial assistance for religious publications.

I offer my pranams to His Holiness Jagadguru Sankaracharya, Sri Sri Bharati Teertha Mahaswamiji of Sri Sringeri Sarada Peetam for blessing me with a Srimukham for this book.

I thank Dr. Sarvepalli Gopal, the eminent historian, for lending me some useful books from his valuable personal literary for reference and for his foreward.

I seek the blessings of the Almighty for the welfare of Sri. P.R. Madhava Rao, Chiranjeevi Pavani Venugopal and Smt. A.G. Prasuna for the encouragement they have given; of Chiranjeevi M. Karthikeya and Kumari M. Kanchana for processing the manuscript, of Dr. (Smt.) V. Radha Rao for the improvements suggested by her; of Sri B. Nagasundaram for editing the Sanskrit slokas and of Sri. N. Lakshmana Rao, retired Surveyor, for preparing a topo map of the Kshethra.

Finally I thank M/s. Sri Maruthy Laser Printers, for promptly and neatly printing this book.

— Pavani Sitaramiah

THE HEAVENLY BLISS

There is ample evidence that Siva was worshipped in one form or other in almost every country in the past. He is worshipped in India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Somanath to Kalighat. His various manifestations are Ardhanareswara, Bhikshatana, Bhairava, Dakshinamurthi and Nataraja famous for His cosmic dance. The popular worship of Siva is in the form of a Linga, which is a symbolic representation. He is worshipped as a Creator, sustainer and annihilator. Saivism, a cardinal aspect of Hinduism, is as old as India and perhaps even older.

In symbolic language of Hinduism, Sakti is the wife of Siva. His Parasakti Uma lends variety, colour, beauty and grandeur to Siva's form and is the very core of His being, the very essence of His nature and the very core of His existence. Twenty eight Agamas and ten Puranas extol Siva. Saivism is a spiritual as well as a social organisation. It is full of life, wisdom and burning devotion. Swami Vivekananda pointed out, "Saivism is the most elaborate, influential and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India". "It stands for all that is sublime in the Siva Cult..Saivism has richly affiliated itself with the great stream of Indian philosophy," observed Dr. Radhakrishnan.

We find in this great work the most luminous utterances of human spirit.

Sri Kalahasti

- Pavani Venugopai

THE HERITAGE

Sri.Sitaramiah belongs to the lineage of Pavani family which is as old as the Kshetra. They were the Sabhapatis presiding over the religious aspects of the temple. They adopted Sri Gnanaprasunamba as their daughter and worshipped Sri Kalahasteeswara as their son-in-law. The Kalyanotsavam during the Brahmotsavam is being performed at the precincts of their house even today.

Sri. Sitaramiah along with his brother Venugopal has earlier published a book relating each of the eighteen Mantras of Isopanishad to the temple. It is gratifying to note that he has written this book with authoritative and dedicated knowledge.

As all the rivers join the sea though they take different routes, all the paths of devotion lead to Lord Siva. This great truth is well established in every episode of this book. This book is sure to enlighten readers with abundant information.

ITI SIVAM

Tirupati

- A.G. Prasuna

Date: 14.2.93

काशीपुरम्



वन्देहं काळहस्तिप्रभं स्वर्णसुरयास्तैरिषितं
 पर्याकृत्य प्रवेष्टोहि नाल्मस्य तपसः कर्म ।
 'इंद्राचार्यसिद्धं सर्वं' स्मारयन् यो विराजते ॥
 भक्तानामिष्टदैवं ते काळहस्तिप्रभं भजे ॥
 पुण्यभारतधर्मं पश्यन्तक्षेत्रेषु अन्यतमं
 श्रीकाळहस्तिप्रभं वायुकिङ्क प्रदानतया विराजते ।
 काकेन, हरितनाभ उपसितत्वात् काळहस्तिरिति प्रसिद्धिः
 सज्जालः । अद्यापि अस्य मन्दिरस्य सुकराजस्य दीपस्य
 इवाका सर्वदा वायुना प्राकिलादृश्यते, इदमेव वायुकिङ्क
 क्षेत्रसिद्धिप्रदं प्रमाणं । कण्ठाया नामा व्यसः श्रीकाळ
 हस्तिप्रभेराय सज्जया विराजमाना गच्छतां प्राप्ताः । "अग्निः किं-
 नकरोऽप्यहो वज्रयो भस्मावतंसायते" इति श्री भगवत्पादाः
 स्वकृतविभाजनन्दनस्य स्तुत्यन्ति । किन्तु स्वर्णसुरयाः नयास्त-
 द्धे भगवान् श्रीकाळहस्तिप्रभः ज्ञानप्रसूनाम्बिका सेवेतः
 कोकान् अन्तर्गतकानि । यज्जायतनपूजायां उपारम्भमाना
 अग्निनायाः जाड्यकथमाना, द्वितीया अस्यामेव नर्च्यो
 आर्चयेत् ।
 श्री कोटरा नरसिंहास्तिभिः अग्न्यायां रचितं श्री काळ
 हस्तिमाहात्म्यं इति ग्रन्थं इदानीं पाषाणी सिताराभायाः
 अङ्गुली भाषायां श्री काळहस्तिप्रभं मदिमा इति नाम्ना
 प्रकाश्य कोकमुपकृतवन्तः इति श्रुत्वा सन्तुष्टान्तरङ्गाः वै,
 आस्तिक भक्ताः दातुं ग्रन्थं पठनेन श्रवणेन च श्री काळह-
 स्तिप्रभान्दुर्गादेण दौहितामुक्तिम्भोयः परंपराः
 प्राप्स्युः इत्यादिप्रसंगे न्महायणस्तुतिः

SRI SANKARA BHAGAVADPADACHARYA PARAMPARAGATHA
HIS HOLINESS SRI KANCHI KAMAKOTI PEETADHIPATHI
Jagadguru Sri. Sankaracharya Swamigal

காஞ்சிபுரம்

वन्दे तुं श्रीगुरुदेवां स्तुतिपुराणास्तुतिरुत्तमं
 परमात्मं त्रिपुरादि नास्ति पश्य तपसः कां ।
 त्रिकां वा समिदं त्रैलोक्यं स्तुतयन् श्री विराजते
 भक्तानामिष्ये च तं श्रीगुरुदेवां भजे ॥

[illegible][illegible]

P.R. Madhava Rao, B.Sc., B.L.,
Former Chairman of the Trust Board,
Srikalahasteeswara Devasthanam.

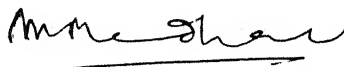
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(A.P)

Date 12-02-1993

It is a great pleasure and privilege conferred on me to have been asked to write a few words about the translation of the gist of Stalapurana of Srikalahasti in English, by the illustrious Pavani Brothers namely Sri P. Seetharamiah, B.A., and Sri P. Venugopal. The stalapurana in Sanskrit language and the recent Telugu translation did not receive the publicity it deserved.

I am very happy to note that the Pavani Brothers who hailed from an ancient family of Sabhapatis of this sacred place which is akin to sharrifs of the cities in our country have undertaken to write in English language the Stalapurana. The English language is acknowledged as a link language in our Country and I am sure this publication will receive All India publicity and all Hindus will know the importance and sacredness of this place.

Being natives of this place and I being born and brought up and educated in this place, I feel proud and also grateful to Pavani Brothers for having undertaken this monumental piece of work. I humble self was associated with our Temple administration for a decade and very much obliged to the author for giving an opportunity to temple authorities to give All India publicity since this work is in English language. May Lord Srikalahasteeswara and his consort Sri Gnana Prasunambika shower their choicest Blessings on Pavani Brothers and help them in their pursuit of religious works that are being undertaken by them.



(P.R. Madhava Rao)

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PREFACE

SPLENDOUR OF SRIKALAHASTI

SriKalahasti in Andhra Pradesh has several outstanding features qualifying it as one of most sacred Siva Kshetras. Nature itself has gifted this place as a Somaskanda - with the peak of Kailasa known as Sivaanandaika nilaya representing the cosmic form of Lord Siva to the South, the Kanakachala dedicated to Sri Durga on the north and the hillock of Kumaraswamy in the middle. The sacred Sivaanandyka nilaya peak with a number of caves and forests, a north flowing river Swarnamukhi with crystal clear waters, naturally formed lingas and idols of Vishnu along its course qualify this place as Satyavrata Bhaskara Kshetra. Of the places dedicated to the lingas attributable to the five prime elements namely space, air, fire, water and earth, this place is graced by the Vayulinga (air). The linga itself is a Swayambhoo, imposing it all of camphor hue and shape like rudraksha beads. The nameless and the formless one has assumed the name and form of his devotees. He is named as SRIKALAHASTEESWARA after his staunch devotees namely the spider (SRI), the serpent (KALA) and the elephant (HASTI). In south India there are kshetras dedicated to the nine planets and Sri Kalahasti is considered as Rahu, Kethu Kshetra. The features of this kshetra, supplemented by the deities of Dakshinamurthy the devoted Kannappa , sparkling Gnanaprasunamba besides the Vayulinga, whose swarupa is covered by a golden screen, the idol of the Sun god, the ghee lamps dancing in the sanctum sanctorum conform to the eighteen mantras of Isavasyopanishad. The Sthalapurana declares that Kenopanishad was propounded here. The presence of a

magnificent Sahasralingeswara, Yakshaguha, Sahasradevata theertha as well as the idols of Indra and other Gods and Umavathi as Haimavati close by lend credence to the upanishad revelation.

While the unique Vayulinga faces west in SriKalahasti the exquisite idol of Balaji Venkateswara faces east. These two idols, Swayambhoo and facing each other, are viewed by a section of scholars as Siva and Durga.

Sri Kalahasteswara was worshipped from time immemorial by Gods, sages and sinners, creatures like spiders, serpents and elephants. Among the several thousands of devotees, Kannappa stands foremost.

This place is known variously as Dakshinakailasa, Dakshina kasi, Dakshinamurthy kshetra, Sadyomukti kshetra and so on. Due to the presence of the Gnana Vighraha namely Gnanaprasunamba (fully blossomed flower of knowledge) this place is known as Vignanakshetra. Generally this kshetra is called Vayu lingakshetra as it has one of the five lingas named after the five mahabhutas.

The construction of this temple clearly shows the paths of Raja Yoga of Patanjali – the two vital nerves of Ida and pingala (Soorya and Chandra) and the sushumna which leads to Sahasrara. The twenty four steps and shat chakras and the presiding dieties are located here. It is essentially a shrine which trains the devotees to practise pranayama. Tradition has it that while salvation can be attained at Kasi only if one dies there, the mere entry into SriKalahasti will bestow the same benefit. Some devotees undertake Sadyomukti vrata by residing here for a whole year observing several austerities, visiting the temple every day and undertaking fasts on full-moon days and worshipping the Lord with single-minded devotion.

The various Gods, Sages and other devotees who performed severe penance in this place installed lingas,

established teerthas and ashramas many of which can be seen even to this day.

The temple itself was constructed in the dim distant past. The Pallavas have carved exquisite figures of Nataraja, Bhikshatana, Alinganamurthy and several other gods and goddesses in the adjacent hill. The Thondamans, the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Vijayanagar kings have made many valuable additions to temple. The idols of Dhakshinamurthy, Gnanaprasunamba, Panchamukeshwara, Sahasralinga and Kannappa merit special mention. It is said that each of the labourers who constructed the temple got a piece of gold, based on their turnover, at the close of the day in the river bed.

Sage Vedavyasa, Adi Sankara, nayanmars like Appar, Sundarar, Sambundar and Manikyavachakar, Srinatha, Durjati, Narkerar and several others have composed beautiful songs and poems in praise of this kshetra and Lord.

Adi Sankara was highly impressed with the harmony that existed among the various groups who worshipped Ganapathy, Subramanya, Siva, Parvati, Vishnu and the Sun God, and this observation appears to be the basis for his Shanmatha Sthapana (establishment of the unity of the six religions which prevailed then). The kshetra covers a vast area with a radius of thirty miles around the main shrine. Besides various shrines for Sankara, there are numerous temples dedicated to several other Gods like Varadaraja, Dharmaraja, Veerabhadra, Durga, Ganga. Every street has a Ramamandir where people congregate and perform Bhajans.

Every day is a festival day and among the festivals Navarathri and Dhanurmasa are significant. The most important festival is the Brahmotsava conducted in Maghamasa (February- March) which attracts thousands of pilgrims from far and near. Bhakta Kannappa occupies the

foremost place in this festival which lasts for twelve days. The Nandiseva on Mahasivaratri day, the Radhotsava on the next day followed by Kalyanotsava are special attractions. An interesting feature of the Kalyanotsava here is that several hundreds of couples choose this occasion for their wedlock to the accompaniment of music and vedic mantras dedicated to the Lord. Giripradakshina covering a distance of about fourteen miles twice a year is also a speciality.

As this place is very close to Tirupathi and is itself a very important kshetra favoured by Iswara, thousands of pilgrims visit it throughout the year.

Even though engaged in various trades and professions like agriculture, weaving, manufacturing of bell-metal vessels, beads, combs, and Kalamkari, the inhabitants of this place prosper by the grace of Sri Kalahasteswara.

A visit to this place is a must for the spiritual aspirants.

Srimad Dakshina Kailasa sikharam samasritah |
Yatradese pravartantae sadhavo dwija sattamah |
tatratya praninam muktih kimutatra nivasinam ||

[SIVA RAHASYA KHANDAM]

STHALA PURANA

Sage Veda Vyasa, son of Sage Parasara, got enlightenment at a very early age, studied the labyrinth of Vedas and codified them. In order to enable lay people to grasp the various injunctions of the four vedas he had written Mahabharatha weaving the Vedic truths into a great epic. In spite of his erudition and vast general knowledge he had no peace of mind. Unable to comprehend the reason for his sadness, he spent several days in passive contemplation.

To his good fortune Sage Narada visited him and after exchanging due courtesies enquired why a great sage like

Vyasa should be restless. Vyasa replied, "Of course, I have thoroughly studied the Vedas, codified them and written the great epic, Mahabharatha. Yet, I know not why I am so sad. I am blessed by your arrival. Kindly help me in regaining tranquility." The divine sage smiled and said, "Dear Vyasa! In spite of your scholarship and ability to produce an immortal epic you have failed to write anything in praise of the Supreme with earnest devotion. Not worldly knowledge, not scholarship, not erudition, that can bestow peace of mind. Real happiness can be achieved by Sradha and Bhakthi alone. So add several puranas inculcating the spirit of bhakthi in them. Though the episodes incorporated in these puranas are old, they will convey a message which will always be fresh. That way you will not only reach the goal but will also lead entire humanity towards it." At the behest of the Devarishi, Vyasa wrote several puranas of which eighteen are famous. One of these is 'Siva Purana' comprising several khandas. SriKalahasti Sthala Mahatmyam finds a place as Siva Rahasya Khanda of Siva Purana.

This Sthala Purana contains various teachings propounded in the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Geetha, epics and Puranas in the form of beautiful episodes. This is at the same time an excellent treatise on Siva Tatwa. In this kshetra seekers followed different paths i.e. of action (Karma), Knowledge (Gnana), devotion (Bhakti) and renunciation (Sanyasa). While some worshipped Siva observing strict sastraic injunctions, the devotion of others was crude and clumsy in the eyes of others. Yet others focussed their attention inwards for self realisation. The methods adopted by the numerous devotees were varied and at times conflicting. But the common factor was their earnestness which enabled all of them, treading different paths, to reach the same goal of realising the Supreme.

Those that worshipped in SriKalahasti included Gods, sages, common folk, animals and even insects. Sinners

repented their past actions and earned the grace of Easwara. With single minded devotion they worshipped the Lord, created teerthas, installed lingas, constructed temples with lofty gopurams, cut exquisite images of Lord in mountains and established ashrams, many of which survive unto this day.

Srikalahasti Sthala Mahatmayam was published in Sanskrit as a separate book by the Maharaja of Venkatagiri about one hundred years ago. An abridged version of it in Telugu entitled "Srikalahasti Mahatmyam" was printed in American Diamond Press and published in 1928 by Sri Kesa Subrayalu Naidu garu. About sixty years back H.H. Swami Vimalananda of Srikalahasti wrote an abridged version of it in simple Telugu. This was published by Smt. A.G.Prasuna in 1984. In the meantime the original was translated incorporating all the ninety chapters with all its details by Brahmasri Vidwan, Vedantha Vidya Praveena Kotra Venkatanrisimha Sastri garu. This book shrouded in tough Telugu saturated with Sanskrit words and phrases, was published by Srikalahasti Devasthanam in 1973. A brief account of the devotees of SriKalahasteeswara was written by late Sri V.S. Venkatanarayana M.A., B.Ed and published by Sri Kalahasteeswaraswamy Devasthanam in 1986 under the tile "The Glory of Srikalahasteeswara and Sri Gnanaprasoonambika".

For the use of Siva Bhaktas visiting this place from various parts of the country and also for the seekers at large, we reverently place this concise volume at the feet of Sri Gnanaprasunamba sametha Srikalahasteeswara. In all humility, we solicit suggestions for the improvement of this book.

-Sankarasya charitam kathamritam

chandrasekhara gunanukeertanam |

Neelakanta tava paadasevanam

Sambhavantu mama janma janmani | |

PAVANI SITARAMIAH

OM
SRI MATRAY NAMAHA:
SRI KALAHASTEESWARAYA NAMAHA:

Chapter - I THE SEVEN PATHS

Kailasavasi bhagavan kalahasteeswara sivaha
karotu nitya kalyanam karuna varunaalayaha:

In the ancient and auspicious forest of Naimisa a number of sages headed by Saunaka were practising several austerities and performing various kinds of sacrifices. They were all anxious to improve their knowledge of Dharma.

The word Dharma comes down from the Vedas. Its connotation is paradoxically vague and explicit. The Vedas ask us to follow Dharma "*Dharmam Chara*" and broadly indicate the essentials of Dharma and declare, "*Yato Dharma Stato Jayah*", which means that Dharma ensures victory. It is a way of life to be adopted and a duty to be performed. The Dharma indicated in the Vedas has been elaborated in the form of several stories in the epics and puranas. Bhishma gives a treatise on Dharma to Yudhistira, Several sages like Manu, Guatama, Vasista, Parasara and Apastamba have made sutras or rules and regulations to be followed in treading the path of Dharma. Of these Dharma sastra of Manu is highly popular and widely accepted.

Dharma is enumerated as the first of the four purusharthas and is said to be the bedrock of the three others namely Artha, Kama and Moksha. Dharma has been prescribed by intelligent persons for the well-being of society. Good character of individuals is absolutely

necessary for an orderly society. With this in view the Vedas and Dharma sastras have prescribed hundreds of rules to be followed by people in general known as Samanya dharmas. They are non-voilence, speaking truth, non-stealing, purity, control of senses and desire to do good to all living beings. Besides these, there are numerous special regulations to be followed by different varnas namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra and different ashramas namely Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Every person is advised to follow the special Dharma prescribed for his varna and ashrama as the adoption of other paths is not safe. Gita exhorts :

Sreyam svadharma vigunah paradharmat svanusthitat
Svadharme nidhanam sreyah paradharma bhayavahah
B.G. 3-35

One's own Dharma, though imperfect, is better than the Dharma of another well discharged. Better death in one's own Dharma; the Dharma of another is full of fear. Steadfastness to duty svadharma strengthens man and aids building of character. They have also provided several exceptions to these rules and regulations for covering special situations. They are known as Apad-dharmas. All these Dharmas not only secure peace in society but also elevates individuals in the spiritual plane. The Dharmas in their totality cover the entire gaumet of human life - Social, political, economical, moral, ethical and spiritual. Whenever Dharma is in danger God incranates on earth to restore it.

While some sutra-karas emphasised on the secular side others stressed upon the spiritual aspect of Dharma. But the great expounder Apasthamba declares that followers of Dharma gain both secular and spiritual benefits. The main aim is spiritual and the secular benefits are incidental. With the aim of reaping a good harvest of fruits, a gardener sows a mango seed, and it grows into a big tree. It not only yields fruits but also gives shade, fragrance and other benefits. Just as the gardener gains

benefits other than the fruits sought by him, the person following dharma seeking punya or spiritual excellence will get material gains also. Thus Dharma lays greater emphasis on the spiritual aspect.

The rules and regulations and the exceptions provided are so voluminous that a person aspiring to tread the path of Dharma is confronted with several doubts at each step. The labyrinth of the laws is bewildering. Great acharyas like Bhishma and Drona could not answer Draupadi when she asked them whether Dharma or righteous conduct permitted her being dragged and disrobed. They only remarked that the law was ambiguous and expressed their inability to give a clear verdict.

The sages of Naimisa, who had learned vedas and were practising the vedic rituals, were also confronted with several doubts regarding Dharma. They were eager to clear their doubts and to gain more knowledge. Fortunately for them the great exponent of epics and puranas, Suta arrived there. Saunaka and other sages were delighted to have the great commentator amidst them. They received the disciple of Vyasa with great reverence and after he settled down, expressed their desire to hear him. They addressed him, "Oh learned Suta! Please let us know all the Dharmas. Indeed what are Dharmas? Which of them have to be followed? Which of them are considered best? Which of them will make a man perfect and which will ensure salvation? The Dharma indicated in the Vedas are elaborately dealt with in epics and puranas. They are clear and at times vague. We beseech you, the disciple of the codifier of the Vedas and the commentator of epics and puranas, to enlighten us, for you are the best person to clear our doubts. We seek your guidance".

Suta was very glad to have the opportunity of speaking on a subject dear to him. Appreciating their eagerness to learn the several instruments of Dharma, he invoked the grace of his guru Veda Vyasa and began:

"The first and foremost of the tenets of Dharma is SATYAM or Truth. Truth and Paramatma are one and the same. There is no God higher than Truth. Vedas repeatedly ask us to speak the truth - *Satyam Vada*. There is nothing impossible for a person wedded to Truth. In spite of several obstacles great emperors like Harishchandra never swerved from the path of truth. Such persons are dear to God and man alike. Scriptures permit a deviation from speaking truth in the protection of women, marriages, life, wealth, self-respect, cows and brahmins. In the days of yore Sage Romasa also emphasised the efficacy of truth to his disciple Bharadwaja and asked him to propagate its value to humanfolk. So truth is the highest of the Dharmas".

To enhance one's spiritual value and to secure peace in society the scriptures enjoin us to tread the path of truth, but one has to struggle hard to adhere to this path. There are several exceptions provided by the law givers. For example:

1. At a time of crisis in life and marriage untruth is permitted *Pramatyaye vivahe vaktavyam anrutam bhavet*.
2. Business community may not speak truth in the interest of trade *Anrutenaiva visam sa srujata*.
3. For political reasons kings and administrators may suppress facts. Power and falsehood are intertwined to some extent.

The scriptures themselves have given several instances where this dharma was honoured in the breach.

When Shakuntalā was brought in a state of advanced pregnancy to the court of Dushyanta, he asked sage Kanwa's disciples whether it was necessary for him, self-sufficient, affluent and a king, to utter a lie or for a rishi having no money and depending on others for food and clothing. Sharp came the reply from the disciples, "The kings are always trained to cheat others, for without cheating, their

power cannot endure. But the sages are not trained that way".

When Sri Rama, the personification of truth, was being driven in a chariot by Sumanta from Ayodhya to the forest, king Dasaratha in great grief shouted addressing Sumantha to stop the chariot. But Sri Rama asked him to proceed. "If the king on return to Ayodhya, questions why he did not obey and stop, inform him that you did not hear him". Of course Sri Rama suggested him to tell a deliberate lie to save a lot of embarrassment.

In Ashoka vana, when Hanuman left after meeting Sita, the Rakshasi women asked who that monkey was and what he spoke with her. Sita bluntly said she knew nothing.

In the Mahabharatha war the words "*Aswathamahataha Kunjaraha*" emanating from the mouth of Dharmaraja with the last word silenced by the conch of Sri Krishna was deliberately connived at taking away the life of Acharya Drona. Here expediency in warfare was the reason.

Sage Bharadwaja comprehended several difficulties in treading the path of truth. All cannot follow this Dharma always. Nevertheless he was anxious to know the other aspects of Dharma. So also were the sages of Naimisa forest.

Having declared Satyam as the foremost of the paths of Dharma, Suta proceeded to narrate the other six paths as revealed by Sage Romasa to his disciple Bharadwaja.

"The second path leading to Dharma is SHAMA or forbearance. A person should develop a balance of mind. He should never gloat over his success or despair over his failure. In fact it is a basic requirement for penance".

Shama means the control of the five sense organs namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the skin, so that the outer world does not disturb us. The inner equipment or antahkarana comprising the mind, intellect, chitta and

ahamkara have also to be controlled so that our own intellect does not push the mind to the objects of the world outside for fulfilling its desires. The tempting objects outside are perceived through the sense organs and the control of these is dama. Brooding on the objects of senses we develop attachment to them; from attachment comes desire, from desire anger sprouts. From anger proceeds delusion; from it confused memory and ruin of reason and ultimate destruction.

Sabdaibih pancha bhi reva pancha panchatvamapuhu
 swagunaih nibaddha
 kuranga matanga patanga meena bhringa narah
 panahabhiranchitah kim
 - VIVEKA CHOODAMANI.

The deer, elephant, moth, fish and the black bee by their own native tendencies fall prey to sound, touch, shape, taste and smell respectively and meet destruction. Then how about man whose five senses are active simultaneously? So conquest of the senses is the means for the attainment of excellence. Shama and dama practised will integrate our personality and make us fit for tranquility.

But it is very difficult to achieve forbearance. The minds of even sages who strove for perfection were carried away impetuously by excited senses. Sages Sanaka and Sananda cursed Jaya and Vijaya at the door step of Vaikunta. Durvasa is a typical example of a Sage who lacked shama. Losing control over senses Viswamitra was attracted by Menaka and Indra by Ahalya. Dasaratha, Kabandha and Parikshit were victims of the wrath of sages. Disappointed in love Devayani cursed Kacha. Sri Rama lost his temper and wanted to scorch the entire sea for not giving him way to Lanka. Sri Krishna laid a limit of one hundred for his tolerance and when it exceeded he killed Sisupala in open court. When Gods and sages found it difficult to practise this Dharma, what about ordinary folk?

"The third path is TAPAS or penance" said Romasa. "The sages performing penance in remote forests and caves had discovered several truths and reached great heights. Gods themselves descend to earth and grant boons to such persons, be they manavas or asuras".

Bharadwaja was not unaware of the merit of tapas. Great sages like Vasista, Sakti, Parasara, Yagnavalkya, Pippalada, Kapila attained immortality by virtue of their penance. As a result of severe tapas a number of sages discovered several truths, sciences and mantras which were handed over to posterity to secure peace and happiness. Prompted by Rajasic and Tamasic nature others like Hiranyakasipu, Hiranyaksha, Ravana and Kumbhakarna had performed unparalleled penance for the sake of self-aggrandizement and invincibility and proved themselves to be a menace. Ultimately they were vanquished. Thus tapas is a double-edged weapon beset with hardship. Indra was always there to disturb the tapas of sages. By virtue of ardent tapas, sage Bharadwaja himself was in a position to lavishly entertain the entire army and retinue of Bharatha. Yet he was sure that this dharma was not an easy one.

The next one enumerated by Romasa was DAANA or charity. "Persons enjoying all their wealth without sharing with others are considered to be thieves. So one should make appropriate gifts to deserving persons at the right place and time. Giving away food, *annadaana*, is considered to be the highest gift. It should invariably be done during Yagna, pilgrimage, important vedic ceremonies like marriage and *parayana* of epics and puranas. Shodasa (sixteen) daanas like gifting cow, gold, land are considered a must on certain occasions. It should not be done with a superiority complex. Emperors like Sibi, Bali as well as Karna are remembered even today for their generosity. Daana blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Gifts of food and clothes should be made liberally by affluent persons at the times of famine, floods and fire havoc. Failing this, the suffering of persons would be desperately driven to the necessity of resorting to dacoity and looting. Gifts ungrudgingly made on such occasions ensure stability of society and solace to the needy. In making gifts the left hand should not know what the right hand does.

It is common knowledge that gifts are usually made most grudgingly or expecting returns. Some persons seek to exploit the recipients by giving petty doles as gifts. Daana made to persons of questionable character will end up in wrong places like gambling houses and toddy shops. The more you give the more will you be abused as a miser by the recipients. The scriptures themselves make contradictory injunctions "Be charitable" is quite opposite of "Do not receive gifts". (Aparigraha). The ambition of man being limitless like an ocean, you cannot satisfy any body through gifts. So this path is not safe.

Romasa continued to elaborate on the next Dharma as YAGNA or sacrifice. "Vishnu Himself is considered to be the embodiment of Sacrifice. *"Yagna vai Vishnuh"* is the vedic saying. The creator ordained that yagna would be the milch cow, Kamadhenu, of men's desires. Gods are supported by Yagna resulting in their bestowing boons on mankind. Thus gods and men obtain supreme good by mutual support".

The Purushasukta says that this universe of names and forms has come into existence by the sacrifice performed by Yagnapurusha, Mahavishnu. SriKrishna tells Arjuna that Yogis, who enjoy the nectar that has been left over after the performance of a sacrifice attain eternal Brahman. To the man who does not offer sacrifice; this world is not happy; how then can the other be? There are several sacrifices, such as Deva yagna, Pitru yagna, Soma

yagna, Aswamedha, Rajasuya, Putrakamesti. While some are a must others are optional. The Karmakanda of the vedas deals with the elaborate rituals, the qualification of participants, the place and the animals to be selected, the size and shape of the homakundas, the money to be procured and the gifts to be made. Most of the sacrifices are performed to gain material benefits and a few of them for happiness here and hereafter. Taking it for granted that their worldly longings are satisfied and pleasures of the heaven are secured, they come down as soon as their punya is exhausted. There is also a danger; if there are omissions and commissions, there will be adverse effects. The sacrifices involve the slaughter of goats, horses, camels and fowls. There is a famous sloka:

Yupam kritwa pasoon hatwa rudhiram kardamam |
Yaddhavyam gamyate swarge narake kona gamyate ||

Binding an animal to a post, killing it, making the mire bloody, if such a man goes to heaven, who else will go to hell? Moreover some sacrifices proved to be disastrous. Daksha's sacrifice ended up with the self-immolation of his youngest daughter Sati. The Rajasuya of Dharmaraja ensued with the game of dice, banishment to forests and a devastating war. Dharmaraja boasted that his Aswamedha, conducted after the great war, was on par with that of emperor Marut, in that the pandals, the dias, the carpets were all of gold.

A visitor asked Dharmaraja, "Have you served food in gold plates?"

Dharmaraja replied, "Yes".

Visitor, "What have you done to those plates".

Dharmaraja, "Of course, I had them cleaned and securely locked in the store house".

Visitor, "But Marut Chakravarthi threw them in the dustbin".

Bharadwaja had thus his own doubts about the merit of this path also.

Yet another means is GRAHASTYAM or maintaining a household. This order ensures happiness to the individual and society. Vedas declare "*Atmavai putra naamasi*". The family traditions are upheld through children. Moreover, progeny enables man to reach higher regions. The family order supports the other three holy orders.

Good relationship, mutual respect, understanding, sympathy and coexistence together form the basis of this order. Vedas and Dharmasastras lay great emphasis on it and recognise it as an essential constituent of an ideal society.

Marriage is a sacrament or samskara and the marital tie is unbreakable. A young man is wedded to a suitable girl of another gotra to be his sahadharmacharini that is to be a partner in treading the righteous path. They pledge to pursue Dharma, Artha and Kama together. The wife is the light of the house and much depends on her. She aids her husband in performing the mandatory five sacrifices to 1. The Vedas 2. Forefathers 3. God 4. Creatures and 5. Man (Brahma, Pitru , Deva, Bhuta and Manushya yagnas) as well as in optional sacrifices that may be undertaken by him. The couple has to follow the guidelines such as Soucha (cleaniness), Viveka (discrimination), Arjava (identification of purpose) to progress in the spiritual field. Vices such as Kama (desire of sensual pleasures) krodha (anger) have to be avoided. In short they have to practice several virtues and avoid vices with a spirit of service and sacrifice. Most of the people follow the rules either out of fear of punishment by the ruler here or by Yama after death.

In spite of the strict rules Adharma gains upper hand over this Dharma. Hiranyakasipu and Ravana, who were great vedic scholars and loved their kith and kin, brought about their ruin in the name of Bhratru Dharma and Rakshasa Dharma respectively. Dhritarastra, the head of a

large household, who had able advisors like Bishma, Drona and Vidura, was ruined due to greed. Many confuse adharma as dharma. (*Adharma dharma iti ya manyate* [B.G. 13-32]). Often the desire oriented grihastashrama itself proves to be the root cause of several evils. In the mighty ocean of samsara the sons become debtors and relatives become thieves. There are crocodiles and whales in the whirlpool of desires in this wretched ocean. So this dharma is a dreadful one. What is the alternative?

"The final path is SANYASA", said Romasa. "One who renounces samsara by thought, word and deed gains real knowledge and the grace of Parameswara. A true sanyasi attains the status of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. To obtain the grace of Siva this is the best course".

Bharadwaja contemplated about this course also. Sanyasa is total sublimation, negating the phenomenon. Sanyasa well practised will result in the attainment of beatitude of Brahman. He is no more conscious of the body and is liberated even while in body and becomes a jeevan mukta. Devoted as he is to the meditation of Brahman, he enjoys imperishable bliss.

But there are rigid rules governing this order. They should be meagre in their food, clothing and association. They can possess only a danda, kamandal and wooden sandals. They have to sustain themselves by obtaining Bhiskha from only a few houses. They should not stay continuously in a single place except during the rainy season. Though learned they should not have a flair for exhibiting it. They should have no enemies nor even friends. Abuses and praises are both same for them. Above all they must relinquish all kamyakarmas.

How many can practice these rigid injunctions? Is it possible for one to close his eyes to the activities around him? Has he not to depend upon families for his bare needs? Many are the pitfalls in treading this path.

Contemplating well, Bhardwaja concluded that all the seven methods are generally resorted to by persons seeking rewards. Desire forces people to take recourse to these methods and it is almost impossible for human beings to overcome desire. This unsatiable desire ends up in misery. So Bhardwaja requested Romasa to indicate if there was any other safe course for obtaining the Lord's Grace. Romasa smiled and said, "I only wanted to test your ability. Your question is very pertinent. I will tell you the easiest and the safest course indicated in the sastras for deriving the grace of Eswara. Residing in Sivakshetra yields the knowledge to attain His grace and this is available as a result of the merit acquired in the course of several births".

Bharadwaja was thrilled and worshipped this mentor who considered the entire world as pervaded by Lord Siva. The disciple was eager to know more details about this course. So also were the sages like Saunaka in Naimisa to hear from the Pouranika Suta.

Chapter 2 of sthalapurana

Kailasasikharavaasam Himavadgiri samsritam |
 Neelakantam Trinetrancha tanme mana Siva
 sankalpamastu ||

Chapter 2

KSHETRAS AND THEIR TRAITS

Saunaka and other sages asked the great Pouranika, Suta, to elaborate the various Kshetras and their distinctive features as narrated by sage Romasa to his disciple Bharadwaja.

Suta began by narrating the special features of holy places: Invoking the grace of Paramasiva, the people of

various castes residing there live in amity and cooperation. They all practise humility, modesty, harmlessness, forbearance, uprightness, service to the Guru, purity, steadfastness, self-control and unswerving devotion to Lord Siva. There are four castes based on their aptitudes and work. They are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. All of them strictly perform the duties enjoined upon their respective castes. Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forbearance, uprightness, knowledge and constant effort to realise the supreme self are the traits of Brahmins. They should smear vibhuti and wear Rudrakhas and perform sandhya vandanam, vedaparayana particularly srirudram, chant mantras, visit temples and worship Siva by rendering shodasopacharas and also practise nirgunopasana by meditating on The Unmanifest. Heroism, vigour, constancy, resourcefulness, not fleeing from battle, generosity and lordliness are the characteristics of Kshatriyas. The Vaisyas follow agriculture, cattle rearing and trade as their duties. The Sudras follow work in the nature of service as their duty. All of them live in harmony and in the service of Parameshwara. They also observe the four ashramas of Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa as prescribed in the sastras. People discharging the duties assigned to them as above and residing in a Sivakshetra will surely attain salvation. Even sinners residing in a Sivakshetra can receive the grace of the Lord. If the kind-hearted Sankara is pleased even worms, insects and birds can attain salvation. So said Romasa.

Bharadwaja was anxious to know the various Sivakshetras conforming to the above traits. Romasa began to elaborate:

Distracting your mind from the external objects of the senses which eclipse the luminous self, listen carefully, of the various holy places dear to Parameshwara, First and foremost is Kailasa, which lies beyond the cosmos inaccessible to human beings. Next are Mounts Spatika,

Rajitadri, Himavanta, Mandara, Sweta Parvata, Vrishabhachala, Shambhulasya (the favourite spot for Siva to dance), Someshwara (where the Linga waxes and wanes as the moon), Anandakanana, Kulakula, Gandharvaranyam, Swarnachala, Kedara, Chittabhanga, Manobhanga, Koormachala, Suryadhara, Dandadhara and Kashi these being dear to Siva.

Further, Rudrakshakanana, Ganasthana, Bilvaka, Ghanakala, Neelakantha, Rudrakoti, Prabhasa, Brahmapura, Rakteshwara, Gomukta, Kurukulya, Bhimothara, Varachala, Naimisharanya, Siddharanya, Siddhapeetha, Ilavrita, Kalyana, Ratnakuta, Shivakankana, Hamsaraja, Shikhavarta, Nagavarta, Kulachala, Kalipura, Mangalavamsha, Sreevasa, Eleshwara, Devapeetha, Vindhya, Mandhana, Hataka and Spatika, Draksharama, Dharmaparikshasthana, Sandhya, Shaivapeetha, Mangala, Govardhana, Mahakala, Sukanasha, Triambaka, Champakeshwara, Anandakanana, Kulakulesha, Brahmadvara, Haridwara, Shatayupa, Saranava, Kurukshetra, Jwalamukhi, Devadaruvana, Mayapura and Jayapura are the favourite spots of Mahadeva.

Of great importance are Srisaila, Ratnasaila, Bhadrashaila, Tungeshwara, Siddhavata, Kapileshwara, Chandrashaila and Dakshina Kailasa graced by Sri Kalahasteewara. These eight places bestow eternal bliss.

Gangadhareshwara, Vataranya, Vamsharanya, Brahmapura, Vitankapura, Kanchipura, Kamapeeta, Pakshiteertha, Pushparanya, Trikhanda, Virinchipura, Medhapura, Dakshalaya, Gokarna, Ghantabhairava, Srishwara, Vedanagara, Bilvaranya, Dakshinodhalaka, Chitrasabha, Chitrvedi, Putharjuna, Rihidruti, Yameshwara, Vahneeswara, Vikramasthana, Atristhana, Trishulaka, Srisandhyanagera, Tamrakuta, Harihara, Rameshwara, kotisthana, Gandhamadhana, Vasantha dhutikaranya, Mankolaranya, Indrapura, Goshta,

Malayaveera, Bhavaniyoga, Ambayoga, Ghateshwara, Gayatrishwara, Andesha, Alasya, Kamakeshwara, Gajaranya, Sugandheesa, Trishirasthana, Abhayeshwara, Shaktipura, Pasupathisthala, Savyavartha, Nagesha, Manigandha, Srivanchi, Srithala, Vedaranya, Uttaradhalaka, Kumbhakona are important abodes of Siva.,

Of no less importance are Madhyarjuna, Gomukthi, Goghreshwara, Tejasi, GauriMayura, Kalasapura, Moolasthan, Chutapuri, kapotha, Suryashyama, Pranavapura, Jhillikesa, Talamala, Tatakavana, Chidambaram, Vriddhachala, Shaktishwara, Sudhaghateshwara, Shwetaranya, Tirvikrama, Panchanadha, Trilokya, Manikarna, Rishivindhya, Vasupriya, Pundarika, Virddhashaila, Veereshwara, Viratahasa, Srikameshwara, Annakoota, Hemaroopya, Tamra, Chitra, Shonachola, Garakantha, Skandashrama, Ratipura, Ardheswhara, Arateertha, Vajrapura and Karkotasushira. These are not all; the list of Siva's abodes is an endless one. The above kshetras possess varying degrees of importance in that they yield salvations in the form of Sayujya, Saroopya, Samipya and Salokya.

Romasa further pointed out that the human body itself is a kshetra and every inch of it is pervaded by the Almighty, the crown portion being the most exalted one. The six wheels constituting Mooladhara, Swadhistana, Manipuraka, Anahatha, Visuddha and Agnyachakra are the auspicious seats of the Supreme. Of the seventy two thousand nerves in the human body, hundred and one are the favourite abodes of Parameshwara. Three of them namely, Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are of utmost importance. The Supreme Lord resides in the human body as the onlooker, the nourisher and the protector. One gets the human form after several births in lower forms. And this human body endowed with several faculties is called a Kshetra for it is the means to realise self. *Sareeramadyam khalu Dharma sadhanam.*

Romasa concluded the narration of the various important Sivakshetras in the world (Adhibhoota) and in the human body (Adhyatma).

Chapter 3 of Sthalapurana.

Idam Sareeram kaunteya kshetram iti abidhiyate
Eatad yo vetti tam prahuh kshetragna iti tadvidah

GITA

This body, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), is called the field and him who knows this, those who know thereof, call the knower of the field.

Antarullasita swachakti peeyusha poshitam |
Bhavat pujopa bhogaya sareeramida mastume | |

Let my body last long so that it may worship You and contain the ambrosia of devotion to You.

Chapter 3

THE GREATNESS OF SRIKALAHASTI

Having learnt that living in a Siva kshetra was better and easier than persuing the seven paths mentioned earlier for the realisation of self, the sages of Naimisa asked Suta to inform which among the various Siva Kshetras was the best one to reside. Suta said that sage Bharadwaja asked Romasa the same question to which the latter replied :

Among the numerous Siva Kshetras in the world, four are considered very important. One of these four is Kasi, where Sri Viswanatha whispers Taraka Mantra in the ears of dying persons ensuring their deliverance from the cycle of births and deaths. Dakshina Kailasa is a place a mere

thought of which wards off all sins. Vriddhachala is a place which enriches knowledge of the Supreme. The fourth is Chidambaram where Siva revels in Anandha Thandava.

Garuda, Sages, Viswadevas, Marudganas, danavas, human beings and countless teerthas are always present in these places. Penance performed in any of these places is blessed with quick rewards. Of these four kshetras, Kasi, Vriddhachalam and Chidambaram will enable seekers to attain salvation in the form of Sayujya while Dakshina Kailasa yields maximum benefits. Knowledge, renunciation and the grace of Siva can be obtained speedily by hearing or praising the magnificance of Dakshina Kailasa. Even sinners in distant places will get high rewards as it is the most favourite place of Parama Siva. It is highly miraculous and is capable of fulfilling the desires of devotees.

From time immemorial countless Gods, sages, animals, saints and sinners have worshipped the unique linga in this place and attained salvation. Never should the splendour and secret of this holiest of the holy spots be made known to persons devoid of austerities and devotion. On the other hand it can be propagated among persons of spotless character, the devotees of Paramasiva and persons seeking salvation.

The sages were anxious to know the exact location of Dakshina Kailasa and names of the great devotees who were benefited there. Applauding their zeal, Sage Romasa elaborated the marvel of that Kshetra. Among the fourteen lokas this Bhuloka and in it Bharatavarsha are important as several devotees of Siva reside there. In Aryavarttha flows the sacred Ganga sanctifying and enriching the region. Gauda and Dravida are the other notable regions. In these holy places people practise yoga to realise the Supreme. Between the rivers North Pennar and South Pennar the residents of the Dravida region worship Siva and get their desires fulfilled. On the eastern bank of the north flowing

river Swarnamukhi, exists the glorious Dakshina Kailasa. This is about 1000 miles to the south of Kasi, 250 miles to the north of Rameswaram, 50 miles to the west of east coast and of equal distance to the north of Kanchi. The magnificent Kailasa mountain with five lofty peaks representing the five heads of the great God is located here. In its vicinity stands the imposing linga of Sri-kalahasteeswara of camphor hue and rudraksha shape with clear marks of spider, serpent and elephant impinged on it.

Originally this linga was worshipped by Vayu and so is known as Vayulinga. In Kritayuga it was glittering like gold and was worshipped by Brahma, Agastya, Parvati Devi, Yogini Neela, Harahara, Mayura, Bheema, Chandra, Surya and Indra. Creator Brahma brought the peak called Sivanandaikanilaya from heavenly Kailasa and fixed it here, while sage Agastya brought down the divine Ganga in the form of the north flowing river Swarnamukhi. In Tretayuga the linga radiated like silver and was worshipped by Hari, again by Brahma, Lakshmi, Subrahmanya, Srirama, Markandeya, Kannappa, Spider (Sri), Serpent (Kala), Elephant (Hasthi) and Sudarsana respectively. In Dwaparayuga it was steel like. A celebrate couple Subhaga and Vijaya, Japala the fanatic, Mrutyunjaya, Narada, Suka, Sanatkumara, Parasara, a group of thousand gods performed penance. In Kaliyuga this linga shines like a rock with camphor glow. Saranga, Varaguna Pandya, Rajendra Chola, Neelakantha, Chakradhara, twin princesses Amritalatha and Kanthimathi, and Padmasena were among the many who worshipped it. All these devotees observed several austerities, performed penance, created teerthas, installed Siva lingas and secured ever lasting peace.

Thus this kshetra attracted devotees from time immemorial and continues to draw thousands of pilgrims to worship Sri-kalahasteeswara.

Chapters 4,5 and 6 of Sthalapurana

Yo Rudro Agnau yo Apsu ya Oshadheeshu

Yo Rudro Bhuvanavivesa tasmai Rudraya namo astu

My salutations to that Rudra from whom all the worlds, fire, the flora and fauna have emanated.

Gnana vairagyadam sakshat Siva sayujya karanam |

Tasmat sarvothamam sthanam idameva muniswarah ||

Oh Sages ! SriKalahasthi endows knowledge and renunciation and enables one to reach Siva Himself. Therefore this alone is the best of the Sivakshetras.

Chapter 4

THE CREATION

Applauding the zeal of Bharadwaja to know in detail the greatness of Sri Kalahasti, Romasa began to explain how creation has come to be.

Creation comprises cause, space and time.

Cause: The Great God desired to create the worlds with his maya and enter into it. As the silk spider sends forth and withdraws its thread, as the herbs grow on the earth, as the hair grows on the body of a living person, so from the Immutable arises the Universe. He creates, supports and withdraws the universe at His will.

Space or Matter: The tiniest part of matter is known as paramanu. It is the minutest part which has no shape nor is it capable of action. Similarly, that quantum

equivalent to the limitless atma is known as mahatparimana. Thus, the entire matter falls between the minutest and the largest.

Time: Similarly, time which is the power of Parameswara is also divided into the minutest known as paramanu kala and paramahatkala. The time taken by the Sun's rays to pass a paramanu is known as paramanukala. On the contrary, paramahatkala is the time taken by the sun to pass over all the manifested worlds.

Multiplication table of time is as follows:

- 2 X paramanu = Dyanuka
- 3 X dyanuka = Trasarenu (trithi)
- 100 X trithi = Vedha
- 3 X vedha = lava
- 3 X lava = Nimisha
- 3 X Nimisha = Kshana
- 5 X Kshana = Kastha
- 17 X kastha = Lagu
- 15 X lagu = Ghatika
- 2 X Ghatika = Muhurta
- 7 X ghatika = Yama
- 8 X yama = Day (12 hrs of brightness + 12 hrs of night)
- 15 X day = Paksha
- 2 X paksha = Masa
- 2 X Masa = Ruthu
- 3 X Ruthu = Ayana
- 2 X Ayana = Samvatsara

One month of human beings is cognised as a day for the manes. The life-span of human being is reckoned as 100 years. Time is measured with reference to the position of the Sun. So Sun who represents time is worshipped. Three hundred and sixty years of ours make a day for the devas. Thousands of such years constitute the four yugas: krita, treta, dwapara and kali. Thousands of such Chaturyugas constitute a day for the creator Brahma. At

the pleasure of Paramasiva numerous creators passed away in course of time. The exit of each Brahma is known as pralaya or deluge.

In the beginning nothing existed, there were no elements like earth, water, fire, wind or ether, nor the derivations there of (Tan- matras) nor ahankara nor *Vishnu*, Brahma, Sun, Moon, planets and stars nor marutganas nor rivers and mountains nor oceans nor day and night. Only the cause of all actions, accompanied by his power of delusion (maya), Paramasiva existed. The eternal, pure, intelligent, omniscient, omnipotent and Satchitananda, Parameswara existed.

And the Great God desired to create the worlds and with the powers of his maya he brought into existence the five prime elements. With the interaction of these elements, creation arose. By means of the all-powerful avidya, Parameswara created, creator Brahma from His right and the protector Narayana from His left. The destroyer Kalagnirudra was brought forth by His mind. He ordered Brahma to create the worlds with various animate and inanimate objects. At first Brahma was reluctant to create the worlds of indescribable miseries. Siva was taken aback by his insolence and deprived him of cognising power. Brahma blinked and prayed for mercy and restoration of his intelligence so as to enable him to proceed with creation.

Parameswara asked Brahma to go to Maha Kailasa and perform severe penance on the slopes of Sivanandaikanilaya, topmost of the five peaks. He further said "there exists a linga, as white as camphor, called Vayulinga as it was originally worshipped by the wind god. There is also a kaivalya teertha in its vicinity. You should perform penance worshipping the Vayulinga with ardent devotion. In due course you will regain your knowledge and will be able to create the worlds." Brahma bowed before

Him, reached Sivanandaikanilaya and undertook meditation as directed by Siva. He also used the waters of Saraswati teertha created by Mahadeva. In due course, the Lord appeared before him and granted him the ability of creation.

Thus endowed Brahma created Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swargaloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka besides Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Talatala, Mahatala and Patala. After creating these fourteen worlds, Brahma became arrogant and began to gloat over his abilities. Then he heard a voice accusing him of treachery to his father and Guru, Siva resulting in his incapacity to proceed further. He was asked to go again to Kailasa and perform penance. He heard the clear voice of Siva asking him to carry the sacred peak of Sivanandaikanilaya and establish it in Bhuloka and to perform tapas there. Brahma again went to Mahakailasa and carried the said peak on his shoulders. He descended on earth crossed Mt. Meru and the Himalayas and approached Kasi. He did not know where to establish the mountain. Providentially he learnt that he had to proceed further south and deposit the peak in a place where it became too heavy for him to bear. When he approached the present Srikalahasti, Lord Siva entered the peak. It became very heavy and dropped down on earth and got fixed there. Brahma engaged himself in tapas as directed by Siva.

Chapter 7 and 8 of Stalapurana.

Kailasa sikhare ramye Sankarasya Sivalaye

Devata tatra modanti tanme mana Siva Sankalpa mastu

May my mind meditate upon that auspicious abode of Sankara, the peak of mount Kailasa, where all gods are happy.

Chapter 5

STAGES OF EVOLUTION

Sage Bharadwaja requested Sage Romasa to reveal the several branches of learning taught by Nilakantha to Parameshti as well as the various stages through which evolution took place.

Romasa said that Parameswara gracefully blessed Brahma with the knowledge of various branches of learning. They are the four Vedas; Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana and the six branches of vedas namely Siksha, Vyakarana, Chandas, Nirukta, Jyotisha and Kalpa. He also learnt itihahas, puranas, smriti, nitisastra, purvottaramimamsas sankhya yoga, saivagamas, vedagamas and so on.

The omnipotent Parameswara manifested Himself as Brahma, Vishnu and Kalagnirudra for the purpose of creation, protection and destruction of the worlds. At first Brahma created tamas, moha, mahamoha, taamisra and andhatamisra; the five illusory branches of knowledge. Recognising them to be sinful ones he created Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujatha and asked them to create human-beings. As these four sages possessed supreme knowledge they declined and undertook penance. Invoking Parameswara, Parameshti brought forth Nilalohita whose one half was feminine and the other half masculine. This Nilalohita multiplied himself as ekadasarudras and brought forth several beings who were fierce and cruel by nature. They began to indulge in horrible deeds and devour everything they came across. The awestruck Brahma prevented them and brought forth Marichi, Atri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Krutu, Bhrgu, Vasistha, Daksha and Narada. Then he created Kardama followed by Vakdevi Saraswati. Infatuated by her beauty, Brahma approached her. His sons Marichi and others heckled at the behaviour of Brahma when he discarded the body in

the form of Nihara or darkness. Assuming a new one he meditated when the four vedas and their branches namely Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Ghandharva and Sthapatya (architecture) emanated from his four heads. The four kinds of yoga as well as the various meters and a number of other sciences and arts emanated from him.

Afterwards Yakshas and Rakshasas of cruel nature and various devatas, Sandhya, Ghandaravas, Apsaras, Bhutaganas, Siddhas, Sadhyas, Pitrudevatas, kinnaras and Kimpurushas were created. Subsequently serpents were born from the angry words of the creator while sages came forth from the dejected Brahma. Brahma noticed that all the beings created by him so far were unfit for further development of mankind. From one half he created Swayambhuva Manu and Satarupa from the other half. By their union two sons and three daughters were born. These daughters were married to Ruchi, Kardama and Daksha who filled the entire world with their progeny.

In the entire creation, Lord Parameswara pervades in a smaller or bigger measure. He glows everywhere as the onlooker, permeater, nourisher and protector.

Chapter 9 of Sthalapurana.

Bahula rajasae visuotpattau Bhavaya namo namah |
Prabala tamasae tat samharae Haraya namo namah |
Jana sukha kritae sattvo-driktau Mridaya namo namah |
Prama-hari padae nistrigunae Sivaya namo namah ||

Salutations to Brahma in whom Rajas predominates for the creation of the universe; salutations to Rudra in whom Tamas preponderates for the destruction of the same; salutations to vishnu in whom sattva preponderates for giving happiness to the living beings; salutations to siva who is efulgent and beyond the three attributes.

(SIVA-MAHIMNAH STOTRAM - 30)

Chapter 6

DESCRIPTION OF BHUGOLA

Sage Bharadwaja desired to know the full contours and relief of the Bhuloka created by Brahma.

Romasa said that the Meru mountain occupies the central part of the earth. Around it there are seven vast islands (Saptadweepas), Seven Oceans, a number of mountains, forests and rivers. To the north of Meru are the mountains Sringi, Swetha and Nila as also the regions known as Kuruvarsha, Hiranmaya and Ramyaka. To its south are the mountains of Himavantha, Hemakuta and Nishada as also the regions known as Bharatavarsha, Kimpurusha and Harapurusha. To the east of the Meru are mount Malyavanta and the region Bhadrastavarsha. To the west are the Mt Gandhamadana and Ketumalavarsha. Closely surrounding Mt. Meru is Illavruthavarsha. All the mountains are adorned with forests yielding fruits like mangoes and jambos. Besides there are four mountains called Mandara, Merumandara and two Suparswas having beautiful lakes in them. Flourishing cities called Marmavati, Amaravati, Tejovati, Samyamini, Krisnagada, Shraddhavati, Gandhavati, Mahodaya and Yashovati are situated in Mt. Meru.

Rivers Sita, Alakananda, Chakshu, Badra have their source near Marmavati in Mt. Meru; flowing east, south, west and north respectively. Parameswara is manifest as Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva and Sadyojata in the regions of Bhadrastwa, Bharatha, Ketumala and Kuruvarsha respectively.

To the south of the Himalayas is the Karmabhoomi of Bharatavarsha. Mountains Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Suktimanta, Ruksha, Vindhya, Paryatra are the sources of several great rivers. There are several other minor hills.

Mighty rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri and many other small rivers make the region fertile. Bharat comprises the following provinces of Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Kashmira, Lata, Gurjara, Malava, Andhra, Dravida, Karnataka, Kuru, Kosala, Kuntala and so on. The land is rich with precious metals, gems, forests, lakes and animals which are all useful to mankind. Bharat is known as Karmabhoomi. The people residing here follow diverse paths and worship various gods. Their food habits differ from place to place. Toiling hard, enjoying and suffering they live a hundred years. As a result of their good and bad activities they prosper or perish.

Entangled in Saivamaya, they revolve mechanically in the wheel of Samsara. By good deeds they go to heaven and by sinful deeds they go to hell. Staying there for a limited period enjoying the pleasures of heaven or undergoing the tortures of hell, they are reborn on earth to experience old age and death. Mysterious are the ways of Karma. Only few seeking refuge in Parameswara can disentangle themselves from Samsara and gain Sayujya.

Chapter 11 of Sthalapurana.

Isavasyam idam sarvam yet kimcha jagtyaam jagat
All this, whatsoever moves in this universe including
the universes, is pervaded by the Lord.

Chapter 7

VIRINCHI'S WORSHIP OF VAYULINGA

Appreciating the eagerness of Bharadwaja to know the detailed manner in which Brahma worshipped the Vayulinga. Romasa began:

Brahma settled down at a place to the south of Vayulinga. He got up very early in the morning performed ablutions in the Kaivalya Tirtha, decorated fifteen parts of his body with the holy ashes, wore the holy rudraksha beads in twelve places and proceeded to worship the Vayulinga. Accompanied by a number of Gods and sages Brahma collected several ingredients for abhisheka of the time-immemorial, renowned Vayulinga.

He performed abhisheka with the scented oils, the five products of cow (Panchagavya), the five amrutas namely curd, milk, ghee, honey and water, juices of several fruits like oranges, citrons, plantains, jackfruit, mango, the decoction of five tender leaves, amalakarasa, kusodaka, panchachurna, maduratraya, tender coconut juice, jaggery water, the water of scented flowers, water from conches and pots sanctified by mantras, sandal and clear water from a thousand pots (Sahasraghatabisheka). He then smeared the scented sandal-paste to the linga and adorned the linga with fine silk dhoties laced with gold. He further decorated the linga with a crown studded with dazzling gems. He also offered ear-rings set with diamonds, necklaces made of pearls, corals and rudrakshas, serpentine sacred thread, waist-belt studded with precious gems and jingling bells.

He created a brilliant throne resting on a eight-petalled lotus. Over the lotus was designed a huge tortoise on which rested several serpent kings like Ananta. The splendid throne had eight elephants led by Iravata on eight directions and was guarded by dikpalas like Indra, Yama. The throne was bedecked with several jewels. As evening approached hundred thousand ghee lamps were lit and arranged in several rows. The entrances and the halls were decorated with plantain trees and festoons of mango leaves. Several gold pots filled with aromatic waters were placed at vantage points. Then Brahma performed worship with champaka, punnaga, chamanti, vakula, potalabya, jaji, karavira, asoka, nipa, kalhara, mallika, dronapushpa,

duttura, amalaka, samspatra etc. With a thousand tender bilva leaves he performed sahasranamarchana. Thereafter he performed arti with incense and ghee-lamps. Different kinds of tasty food stuffs, sweets, bevarages, coconuts and fruits were offered by way of Naivedya. Betel-leaves along with nuts, cardamoms, cloves, cashew-nuts, dates, almonds were offered. Subsequently lights in the forms of a chariot (Ratha-deepa), a five headed serpent (Nagadeepa), a human being (Purusharupa mriga deepa), a bull (Vrishaba deepa), a set of thousand lights (Sahasrarcha deepa), five separate lamps (Sthalipanchaka), a pot (Kumbhadeepa) were presented. The deeparadhana came to an end by offering of camphor.

Vibhudi, an umbrella and chowrie (chatra-chamras) were presented and mantrapushpa was chanted. Shadangaparayana mimamsa, yogasutras, itihasas and puranas were recited to please Paramasiva.

This was followed by music to the accompaniment of Veena, Venu, mridanga, sankha and other instruments. He reverentially prostrated circumbulated and again prostrated. He performed the japa of Siva Panchakshari a hundred thousand times and offered several mudras to Parameswara. Observing non-violence, truth, peace, self-restraint, humility, unostentations, forbearance, purity, self-control, courage, non-attachment, renunciation, devotion, solitude, even-mindedness in happiness and misery, kindness to all beings, silence and perceiving Lord Siva as pervading everywhere he spent the whole night in meditation. (see Appendix I)

Lord Siva was very much pleased with the unparalleled worship offered by Brahma. Adorned with a gemset crown and a number of jewels, with the crescent moon gently swinging on his fore-head, having the hide of an elephant as his upper garment, bearing various weapons like trident, anchor and sword, mounted on his favourite bull Nandi accompanied by smiling Parvati and devout

devas, yakshas, gandharvas, kinnaras, kimpurushas, siddhas, sadyas, Vishnu and Indra, Lord Parameswara emerged from the Vayulinga on the full moon day of Makhamasa, when the star Makha was in ascendancy. Brahma was overjoyed and sang in praise of the Lord~ who blessed him with several boons: namely single minded devotion, the withdrawal of Saivamaya engulfing him, unlimited knowledge, restoration of powers of creation, a permanent abode in the Satyaloka, the linga to be installed by him to bear his name and gifting the persons who worship that linga and use the Saraswati teertha as well as those who contemplate on this episode with happiness in both the worlds..

At the behest of Parameswara, Brahma installed a beautiful linga with five faces, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojata, Vamadeva and Isana. Brahma worshipped the linga and initiated Brahmotsava for Siva. After completing the festival, Brahma went to Satyaloka.

Chapter 15 and 16 of Sthalapurana

Brahma Muraari Suraarchita Lingam
Nirmala Bhaasita sobhita lingam
Janmaja dukha vinasaka lingam
Tat pranamaami Sadaasiva Lingam

I bow low before the Sadaasiva Lingam, ever being worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and other gods which is ever aglow in all its purity and which destroys the sorrows of birth.

Chapter 8

SAGE AGASTYA

During kritayuga a number of celestial beings including Vishnu, Brahma and Indra, heavenly sages like Narada, the presiding deities of the various oceans and

rivers and several others went to Kailasa to worship the Great God Sankara. The conference, packed with these holy personalities, was presided over by Sankara with his consort Parvathi by his side. Lord Brahma got up and raised the following questions.

"Which is the greatest among Dharmas? Who is the greatest among the Gods whose worship means the worship of all other Gods?" Sage Bhrigu rose and declared that the worship of Lord Vishnu was the highest of all the Dharmas for he was the greatest of all the Gods and his worship included the worship of all the Gods.

Sage Agastya protested and said that Lord Siva was the greatest God; the whole universe had its origin only in Him. The creative power of Lord Barhma and protective power of Lord Vishnu were only derived by the grace of Sankara. In Him are all gods. So His worship is the worship of all gods and it is the best Dharma. A verbal duel ensued between them. Agastya had posed a challenge, "Who so over bestows on me the supremacy of being the best, that God alone is to be worshipped. I am going to perform severe penance to achieve that aim". Bhrigu accepted the challenge.

At that stage Vishnu called Bhrigu aside and pointed out that Paramasiva was the father of entire universe as also of himself and all other Gods." I owe my powers only to the great God. So also all other Gods." Thus enlightened Sage Bhrigu accompanied by Vishnu paid obeisance to Sankara. The conference ended. Sage Agastya left for Dhakshina Kailasa to perform penance to achieve superiority.

Agastya's penance had no parallel. It was so intense that the heat generated by it was scorching the three worlds. Devendra was afraid that his high position would be occupied by some body dear to the sage. So he employed Urvasi, Menaka and Rambha to distract the penance of the

sage by diverting his attention using their artful and seductive blandishments and solicitations. He sent Vasantha and Manmadha to aid these devine damsels.

Vasantha made the trees bloom with fragrant flowers and the birds sing lovely notes. The sages in the hermitage fell a prey to the bewitching beauty of the heavenly dancers. Sage Agastya contemplated as to the cause for the unusual vernal bloom of the foliage and the mad behaviour of his disciples. He recognised the cause and prayed to Bhairava, the Kshetrapala. Bhairava assumed the form of a charming person. Those heavenly harlots, who came to entice Sage Agastya, were themselves enticed by Bhairava's captivating personalty. Their passionate attachment was mercilessly exploited by Bhairava. When those adulteresses were completely deprived of their veils and guiles, Bhairava stood before them in his real form. On seeing his ferocious and houndish form those damsels were frightened and fled to their heavenly abode in utter despondency, defeat and disgrace. They were preceded by Vasantha and Manmadha. The sages regained calmness and continued the penance.

Without any further disturbance sage Agastya continued his tapas. He would stand amidst fire in hot summer and in pouring rain in the rainy season. He would stand naked in bitter winter. Neither scorching Sun nor biting cold would affect his penance. He drastically reduced his food. In due course Lord Siva was pleased and appeared before him mounted on his favourite Bull and accompanied by his consort Uma and other deities. Agastya's joys knew no bounds. He praised the Lord in the words pregnant with Vedic connotation.

He requested the Lord to forgive Sage Bhrigu for talking impertinently and to grant the wishes of those that worship the Linga installed by him by repeating the verses coined by him. The Lord was pleased to grant the boons and declared that the Sage merited to be worshipped hence forth by all the Gods.

As the sage entered his cottage he heard a clear heavenly voice.

"Oh! Sage, This lovely place looks like a night without moonlight, a pond without water and a council hall without scholars. This place with its heavenly Kailasa peak, the Swayambhu Vayu Linga and several hermitages lacks a river. You should strive to bring the heavenly Ganga to flow nearby as a sacred river. You only can accomplish this great task". The sage wondered.

He then met Vinayaka emerging from Patala after vanquishing Gajasura and prayed him for success in his endeavour. Directed by him he went to Brahmastala a few miles west of his ashram to accomplish the task entrusted to him.

Chapter 21 of Sthalapurana

Na tasya kaschitwariti rasti loka
Sa chesitaa naiva cha kasya lingam

He has no superior, or ruler, or any cause. Nor is there any sign to point Him out.

Chapter 9

SRI PATALA VINAYAKA

Ekam Sad Vipra bahuda vadanti: Reality is one, sages call it by many names. The ocean of power is indivisible. It focalises and polarises itself in various forms. No one can name or count all the manifestations of energy but the Sages concentrated their attention on some of the most important of them. Each aspect of the Divine Power is regarded as a separate god. Virat Purush is conceived to have thousands of heads, hands and feet and as such he possesses thousands of names and forms. All names are

His. If reality is one, Indra, Vayu, Yama, Rudra etc are all certainly the names of the one God of universe. We worship hundred different gods in hundred different ways, but we are aware that essentially there is only one object of worship and the same face is seen differently through hundred coloured glasses.

The sages of yore had visions of that Reality and had evolved techniques of meditation and worship, invoking different mantras and symbolic idols represent various aspects of the universal power. The most popular of the Gods we worship is Lord Vinayaka, whose idols are found in every house, every street corner, every village, throughout the length and breadth of our vast country. Through Mahayana Buddhism he has entered Tibet, China and Japan. Vedas have extolled him in the famous hymn: "Ganananthwa Ganapathigum Havamahe". Of the upahishads he is invoked through (a) Ganapathupanishad, (b) Ganesapurva tapinupanishad and (c) Ganesothara Tapinupanishad. Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada has composed several verses in praise of Him. No other god is worshipped without first invoking Ganesa. Thus He occupies the foremost place in the Hindu Pantheon.

Lord Ganesa is a symbol of the holy word OM. He is light as feather (Krisa) and robust as an elephant (Sthula) at the same time. He is the vanquisher of all obstacles and evil forces. He is usually inactive but capable of dynamic actions. He is the Lord of fulfilment (Siddhi) and intellect (Buddhi). The whole universe is in Him.

The sages, sculptors and scholars could easily capture his form symbolic of all attributes. His trunk is in form of omkara. (Pranava Swarupa Vakra thundam). Though he has an elephant's body, he is so light as to be carried on a small mouse. To ward off obstacles and to suppress evil forces, he wields an Ankusa as his weapon. He represents the inert energy of Muladhara at the very base, but once it

is kindled and released, it can penetrate the six wheels and the three obstructing knots and reach the highest conceivable point of Bindu in Sahasrara. That is why he assumes the form of a dwarf. As the Lord of fulfilment and intellect he has two wives Siddhi and Buddhi. While Subrahmanya is the commander of Deva Sena or the Battalion of Gods, Ganapathi is in charge of Siva Ganas and Bhuta ganas.

Ganesa is worshipped in different ways such as 1. Maha Ganapathi, 2. Haridra Ganapathi, 3. Uchista Ganapathi, 4. Navaneetha Ganapathi, 5. Swarna Ganapathi, 6. Santhana Ganapathi. Several temples enshrine Ganapathi in various forms, such as Balaganapathi, Taruna Ganapathi, Bhaktha Ganapathi, Veera Ganapathi, Sakthi Ganapathi, Dwija Ganapathi, Siddi Ganapathi, Uchista Ganapathi, Vighna Ganapathi, Kshipra Ganapathi, Heramba Ganapathi, Lakshmi Ganapathi, Maha Ganapathi, Vijaya Ganapathi, Nrithya Ganapathi and Urthwa Ganapathi. He has four, five, six, eight or even ten hands, with different weapons or signs (mudras). Special mention has to be made of Yoga Ganapathi at Pillayarpatti, Ramnad District, Ucchi Ganapathi on the top of a hill in Trichirapalli and Patala Ganapathi deep down in the basement chamber in Srikalahasti temple.

The following is the legend connected with this shrine as narrated by Romasa to Bharadwaja in Srikalahasti Stala Purana.

Once Parvathi decided to perform severe tapas at Srikalahasti before reaching Kailasa. In order to ward off obstacles she invoked the help of her own son Ganapathi to keep guard and conferred the following attributes on him 1, Papaharaka 2. Vighna Haari 3. Parvathipujitha and 4. Pustika. At that time a demon called Gajasura was causing havoc on earth and came to disturb the meditation of Parvathi. This Pusti Ganapathi chased Gajasura to Pathala

loka and vanquished him. In the meantime sage Agasthya, who was camping at Srikalahasti was directed by a divine voice to provide a holy river at the place. He discussed the matter with his disciples and sought their assistance in fixing the proper mountain from which the river should have its source. The holy ethereal Ganga had to be brought down to earth in a proper place. Its course was to be through sacred ashrams and lands which were to be made fertile. The water was to be crystal clear and fit for worship by Gods and sages and capable of turning saints out of sinners before it joined the sea. As he was contemplating thus, he met Lord Ganesa returning from Pathala at its entrance, a few yards south east of the Vayu Linga.

He immediately gathered durva grass, Arka and Dhatura flowers and worshipped Lord Ganesa as laid down in the Skanda Purana. He offered different kinds of sweets made of pure cow ghee and modakas and finally prostrated before Him and praised Him as follows :-

"Oh son of Lord Siva! Vighna Raja ! the one with an elephant head ! the vanquisher of Gajasura ! one who radiates all the worlds ! Ekadanta ! Bestower of boons to devotees ! you are worshipped by gods and demons. You are dear to Siva as well as Vishnu. You are the elder brother of Skanda ! your huge belly accommodates all animate and inanimate beings, Your curved trunk is in the shape of omkar. You are all knowledge and kindler of intellect".

Pathala Ganapathi was very much pleased with the worship offered by the sage and smilingly asked him to spell out his desires. Sage Agastya once again prostrated before Him and asked the following boons

- 1) You should be renowned as Agasthya Vandita, Bhaktha Vanchitardha prapuraka, Gajananari and Pathala Gartha vasi.
- 2) Whosoever worships you with these four names should overcome all obstacles.

- 3) A Teertha be created by the Lord by name SarvaVighna Prasamak, a bath in which should be highly beneficial.
- 4) Lord Vinayaka himself should be ever present in the Pathala Bila (a resort deep down) granting boons to His worshippers.
- 5) To indicate the sacred hill peak from which Akasa Ganga should have its source to flow by the side of Srikalahasthi, on its way to join the sea.

Lord smiled and granting these boons, first dug out a teertha with His own tusk from which sprung the holy Pathala Ganga and asked the sage to have his bath in it. Then He indicated that Bramhachala eighty miles to the West of Kailasagiri, should be the starting place for the new river. Following these instructions meticulously the sage succeeded in bringing the Ganga and led its course, through various holy spots and northwards at Srikalahasthi and then to sea. Because of its crystal clear waters it was called Swarnamukhi. The river is also worshipped as Agasthya Girija and Agasthya nandini. A bath in this river particularly at Srikalahasthi is highly meritorious. Thus sage Agasthya's success in bringing forth the holy river is due mainly to his worshipping Pathala Vinayaka.

Chapter 22 of Sthalapurana

Agastya vanditam vande vanchitardha prapurakam |
 Pranavam pranavakaram patala mukha vasinam ||
 Pustikaya namastubhyam tustim pustim cha dehi mae |
 Sarvavighna haram devam sastangam pranamamyaham ||
 [B.Nagasundaram]

Oh mighty Vinayaka ! Thou art victoriously seated at the threshold of Patala (after vanquishing the naughty demon Gajasura) and worshipped by Sage Agastya. Thou art the very personification of Omkara warding off obstacles and granting boons. Seeking strength and happiness I bow down before Thee.

Chapter 10

RIVER SWARNAMUKHI

Sage Romasa continued :-

With the blessing of Pathala Vinayka, Sage Agasthya went to Brahmachala to perform penance. The lofty mountain was covered by a dense forest of Bilwa, Aswatha, Banyan, Mango, Orange and several other trees, flower-bearing shrubs and thick bushes. Celestial beings like Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Kimpurushas had their habitations there. As the atmosphere was serene several sages selected that place for building their ashrams. It was indeed a heaven on earth.

Sage Agastya was reverently welcomed by the sages there. Requested by them he installed a Siva linga on the mountain peak. He told the sages that the purpose of his visit was to bring a sacred river to the region. He undertook a severe penance. Perturbed by the sage's tapas Brahma and other gods went to Kailasa and requested Parameswara to pacify the sage. The Lord of Kailasa told Brahma that the sage was engaged in the fierce penance for the sole purpose of bringing a sacred river and make the place lovely and prosperous. It was time for his selfless endeavour to become fruitful. The Lord asked Brahma to tell Ganga that he desired her to fulfil the wish of the sage by forming a lovely river with its origin in the mountain peak. She should then follow the course led by the sage. Brahma conveyed the message to Ganga and soon both of them appeared before the sage. He was overwhelmed with joy to see them and to learn the command of the Great God. He requested Ganga to manifest herself as a river with crystal clear waters. And Ganga agreed.

Ganga transformed herself as a pretty river on the summit of the mountain. The spot where Devi appeared came to be known as Agastya Theertha. The sage led the

way and the river followed him. Jumping with joy, she descended the mountain. As the river flowed eastward rivers Penna, Vijrapada, Kulya joined. It then reached the foot of the magnificent mount Venkatachala with its dazzling seven peaks. People who take bath in the river and worship Balaji of the Seven Hills would always get their desires fulfilled. As the river flowed further down it passed by the side of Kapila Teertha, where Sage Kapila worshipped Siva in the distant past. Then it took its course towards Parasara Teertha, Suka Teertha and Soma Teertha from Skanda hills joined it at a place called Rama teertha. A little later a stream from Swami Pushkarini, near Balaji temple, joined it. Then the river took a turn to the north. As it continued to flow north-wards it reached the glorious peak of Dakshinakailasa the abode of Lord SriKalahasteesa. The grandeur of the place had increased by the flow of the river. Further down it passed to the west of PapavichedaKshetra where the unique linga of Ardhanareswara stands. A little later the river took an eastern turn and sanctified several ashrams and kshetras. Finally it joined the sea which welcomed it with its caressing waves.

Thus the holy sage accomplished this task and enhanced the sanctity of Dakshina Kailasa. By the advent of the river the place has become complete with a lofty mountain with forest and caves, a naturally formed linga and a sacred river. It has no parallel in all the three worlds. The sage though little in stature has very big achievements to his credit. He suppressed the naughty Vindhya mountain and drank the entire sea water. He was responsible for bringing several sacred rivers to the South. Romasa maharishi said, "This great Sage has to be worshipped by everyone. His worship on the banks of the river brought down by him, particularly near SriKalahasti where the river flows north, is highly meritorious, for the sage is none other than Parameswara himself. The worship

has to be completed by offering suitable gifts to holy persons."

As soon as the course of the river was settled sage Agastya returned to Srikalahasti to have his bath in the river and to worship the holiest of the holy lingas there. Brahma told Vayudeva, "Along with the sage Agastya, a number of other sages, Gods and gandharavas are going to take bath in the river. You must go there and proclaim the twenty five names fo the river. Future generations will prosper by uttering the names which are effective mantras".

So Vayu went there in time and in a gentle but clear voice tuned the names of the river. As the waters of the river were as pure and valuable as gold it was called Swarnamukhi. The names spelt out by the wind god were:-

"1. Agastya giriya 2 Brahmaputri 3. Agastya nandini
4. Viyat Ganga 5. Sarvateertha sevitā 6. Saridwara
7. Avichinnaraya 8. Bahiratan malapada 9. Pavani
10. Trijagadhatrī 11. Pavitrikrita Digmukha
12. Sivanandakari 13. Akhanda Brahma, Vignana datri
14. Vegavati 15. Yasaswini 16. Mahabhaga 17. Vakraga
18. Ghana Naadini 19. Sudha 20. Divyodaka 21. Pasamula
nikrintari 22. Udanmukha vahini 23 Manogyasikata
24. Pancha panchasa chailabhedini 25 Swarnamukhi.

These names of the river please Sankara. Gods themselves vied with one another to have a bath in this river. No doubt it makes people healthy, wealthy and wise. As is Purushothama among Gods, as is the moon amidst of the stars, as is Gayatri among mantras, so is this river flowing northwards near Dakshinakailasa glorious among the rivers."

Agastya and others were filled with awe to hear the names uttered by Vayudeya. They took their holy bath and worshipped Sri Kalahasteswara and left the place with a sense of fulfilment.

People can wash off their sins by worshipping the river chanting the following verses :

1. Agastyachala Sambhutam Poorva Sagara gamineem
Samasta papa hantreemtwam Swarnamukhareem sraye ||
2. Mahapataka viplustam gatram mama subhodakai
Kshalayami jagaddatri Sreyasa purayaswa mam ||

A bath in the river on the eclipse and other holy occasions is highly rewarding.

Chapter 25 of Sthalapurana

Chapter 11

SRI GNANAPRASUNAMBA

Why was Bhavani cursed during Krita yuga? And how was she redeemed of the curse and came to be known as Gnanaprasunamba? These questions of Sage Bharadwaja were answered by Sage Romasa by narrating the following episode.

In Kailasa Lord Siva was in court attended by various Gods, when Bhavani was sitting next to Him in all her splendour. The prime of her youth with startling display of her glittering ornaments, dazzled the whole audience. She saluted her Lord and asked him as to who was the greatest of all the Gods, Which was the greatest of the mantras and who was the most competent to impart Divine Knowledge. Lord Siva appreciated her questions and told her Siva Panchakshari, occupying central place in the Vedas in the Satarudriya, synonymous with His very self, was the greatest among the seven crores of mantras and that He was the most competent to impart it. She implored Him to initiate her into that mantra. The Lord smiled and said that she in the pride of her bewitching beauty and rajasic

qualities was then unsuited to receive the mantra as it could be given only to persons endowed with Satva guna. She beseeched Him to deliver the mantra to her as she had in no way misused her youth or her wealth. The compassionate Lord agreed and gradually lead her into the preliminaries upto the order of silence (Mouna Deeksha).

Instigated by her authority, youth, beauty and foolishness Bhavani broke her silence and told her attendant Malini that Lord Siva has agreed to impart the secret Panchakshari mantra to her. The Lord perceived this and to the bewilderment of all cursed her in the open court to discard her proud heavenly body and be at once born among mortals. Parvati repented her foolishness and fell at her Lord's feet and requested Him to pardon her fault. Once pronounced the curse was irrevocable. So in all kindness Mahadev Siva asked her to go to SriKalahathi in her mortal body, where she would find her celestial body in the form of huge bilva tree. She should perform penance until she gained Satvika guna, when she would be enlightened by the five lettered mantra by the Lord Himself. Her associates Malini and others would also be there to assist her.

Parvati accordingly discarded her heavenly body, and assuming different forms appropriate to the various regions in her downward sojourn, finally took human form on reaching earth. She entered the Himalayas and was enveloped in ignorance. She wandered in the vicinity of Kedarnath, unable to find her way to the Akhanda Bilva forest. Seeing her plight Lord Siva asked Sage Narada to assist her. Narada appeared before her and asked her to invoke the help of Ganapathi. Thereupon Ganapathi came to her and promised to lead her to the spot indicated by the Lord. He guided her to the banks of Swarnamukhi and disappeared.

Lord Siva assumed the form of an old brahmin and enquired who she was and what she wanted to do. Parvat

told him all her suffering and enquired which spot was most suitable for her penance. The brahmin told her that the place close to the south west of Vayu linga known as VignanaKshetra was most suitable for her. She established a teertha named after her (Gauriteertha) in Swarnamukhi for her daily bath and ablutions. She would worship the Vayu Linga with ten thousand leaves picked by her friends from the Akhanda Bilva tree which was none other than her former celestial body. She invoked Durga to protect her during her austerities. As she intensified her penance, She gave up food and lived on dried leaves; gave up dried leaves and lived upon water; then on mere air as her food. The Lord wanted to test her steadfastness and the sincerity of Durga and created an artificial deluge. The sages there ran helter and skelter. Durga magnified her body and took the entire ocean into her palm and drank it. Hence Durga came to be known as Hastatta Sagara. But Parvati continued her tapas unperturbed.

She controlled her breath and by Pranayama, roused Kundalini to cross Brahma and Vishnu Grandhis and finally retained it near Rudra Grandhi close to her eyebrows. Hundred years passed like this. The old Brahmin appeared before her and made kind enquiries and assured her that Siva would appear before her on Pushya Pournami. Thus reassured Parvathi continued her penance.

As anticipated, Lord Siva accompanied by Brahma, Vishnu, Yakshas, Gandharvas, etc., appeared before her on his Holy Bull, Thus blessed Parvathi prostrated before her Lord. Siva in all his compassion was moved on seeing her emaciated body. He wanted to endow her with a body hundred times better than her previous heavenly body. He invoked Kailasa Ganga and asked Parvati to take bath in the holy waters. This done she emerged with a wonderful shine and fittingly stood by the side of Siva in all radiance. The accompanying celestials themselves danced with estacy and worshipped the complementary pair.

Uma (Parvathi) exclaimed "Oh! Lord with crescent moon as a jewel on your locks; Oh fived faced one; representing the five letters of thy Holy name; undaunted one with live serpents as ornaments; blue necked one; with ashes on the forehead; thy sport creation, sustinance and annihilation; pardon me". Siva assured that they would ever remain unseparated in that Holy place and that people worshipping them would get all their desires fulfilled.

Finally, Parvathi submitted that she had given up all her Rajasik quality and entered Satvika and requested Him to initiate her into Siva Panchakshari so as to gain knowledge and wisdom (Gnana and Vignana). Siva said with a smile, "Of all the seven crores of Mantras, Siva Panchakshari is the best one. In Sivaagama and the Vedas it forms the central piece. It is the verbal form of Siva's very life. This Mantra ensures Bhukti and Mukti (Welfare and Salvation). With the letter OM, it becomes six lettered. Though single lettered OM has in it all the potency of a banyan seed. One who repeats this Mantra is well protected. Let him belong to any caste or creed, there is no necessity to determine an auspicious day or time with reference to an almanac. Any person may start practising this Mantra at any time". So saying the Lord initiated her into various orders (deekshas) and finally into Siva Panchakshari. In consequence, she gained Siva Gnana and was henceforth known as Gnanambika. She repeated this Mantra 50 lakh times near the Vayulinga in all solemnity. As the flower of her knowledge developed and fully blossomed she was known as Gnana Prasunamba.

Durga was also relieved of her jet black complexion and was endowed with a golden hue. Thus she came to be called Kanaka Durga and her hill Kanakachala.

Chapters 26 to 30 of Sthalapurana

Anugraha tirobhava sriti sthiti laya kriyaam |
Nigamaaswara varam Gnanaprasunambam aham bhaje ||

I worship Gnanaprasunamba who is ever intent on the five functions of regeneration, disappearance, creation, protection and destruction of the universe and who is highly praised by the Vedas.

Chapter 12

YOGINI NEELA

Sage Romasa narrated the story of the Yogini Neela to Sage Bharadwja as follows :-

Oh Bharadwaja! To the south of the Himalayas, there is a country known as Malava. A river called Malaharini, having its source in the Vindyas, flows in that region. On the banks of this river is a hamlet known as Viprakuta in which a brahmin named Dharmatma lived. He had a daughter named Ghanakala. In her previous birth she was a learned brahmin by name Kalaanidhi. As a result of her past sins she became a widow at a very young age, but was very learned and acquired the title "Yoga Vidya". She visited several sacred places. She went to Mithila and learnt Brahma Vidya from emperor Janaka. She became very proud of her learning and was boasting that there was no one equal to her in the knowledge of Self. She used to mock at learned sages wherever she went. At last she reached Nepal and met a great sage named Kauntaravya whom she wanted to defeat. Pretending all humility, she prostrated before him and told him that she had conquered several sages and that there was no one equal to her. She invited him for a philosophical discussion.

The Sage became angry at her arrogance and told her " You are really a great learned person and there is none to excel you, Please leave me alone . Please go to those who are more learned. I know very little. You are all knowing". But she was not satisfied and insisted that he should encounter her in a verbal duel. Then the sage in the presence of several other sages and inmates of his hermitage addressed her, "Oh Ghanakala! Are you not well versed with the knowledge of Brahman? Please tell me whether you know Brahman or not?" This was an intricate question of a Vedantin; but without understanding its implication she replied that she knew Brahman. The sage pointed out her foolishness and quoted the famous verdict "*Yasya Matam Tasya Matam, matam yasya navedasaha | avignatam vijanatam, vignana mavijanatam |*". It is a convention that persons who have realised Brahman would say that they do not know Brahman for it cannot be perceived by senses nor expressed in words. Though you are aware of this vedic truth in arrogance you said in the assembly of sages that you know Brahman. In this way you say you had conquered several sages. For insulting the sages may you become a ghost".

Then Ghanakala realised her folly and prostrated before the sage and requested him to redeem her of the curse. The sage was pleased and said, "The curse cannot be revoked. After wandering as a ghost for several years, you will meet sage Agastya who will show a way out. You will finally reach the most sacred place on earth known as Kasi of South, suffer Bhairava Yatana for a short while and attain redemption in the hands of Lord Siva."

At once she became a terrible ghost with dark blue complexion, with big teeth, red face, huge belly and other ugly features. By virtue of her colour she came to be known as Neela Pishachi. She wandered on the hills and in the forests, ate flesh and drank blood but her hunger could

never be satiated. People who saw her were terrified and ran hither and thither. After several years of wandering she reached the hermitage of sage Agastya near Deepa teertha.

On reaching the proximity of this holy place, she smelt the fine fragrance of the homa air and regained a little of her past knowledge. She wondered at the change of her colour from utter darkness to pale blue. In the meantime she saw the short sage Agastya coming near the pond and prostrated to him from a distance. The sage could comprehend her past through his mental eye and asked her "Are you not the great philosopher Yogavidya? By insulting sages you have become a ghost. Nobody can alter fate. It has only to be suffered." Encouraged by these endearing words, she reverently said that she was really fortunate in having his darsan. Her sorrow was ending and pleasantness was sprouting in her heart. Great sages would help people like her in despair. She requested him to show her a way of release from her bondage. The sage was kind to her and told her, "I will direct you to a very sacred place namely Southern Kailasa where flows the river Swarnamukhi northwards. On its banks the Vayu Linga of immense power stands. To the south of this Linga (at a distance two miles) there is a hill known as Siddhalaya. You go there and perform penance for fifteen years and by repeating the Bhairavamantra and prayer of Sri kalahasteeswara, you will be redeemed and obtain eternal bliss". He initiated her into the mantra and gave her the text of the prayer. She fervently repeated the mantra on the banks of Deepateertha when Bhairava appeared in her dreams and showed the way to Dakshina Kailasa.

Following the path indicated in her dream she reached the sacred place, took bath in the Swarnamukhi and worshipped Vayu Linga. Then she established herself in Siddhalaya and performed penance repeating the mantra

and prayer for fifteen years. The hill where she performed tapas came to be known as Neelachala. At last by meditating on the Bhairava mantra and repeating the stotra for the prescribed period seven eighths of her sins were washed off. She ardently prayed to Bhairava to finally redeem her when he appeared before her on the third day of bright moon of the month Vaisakha known as Akshayatadiya, took her on the end of his trident, revolved it for a period of two gadiyas and threw her northwards. Her body fell in dakshina kasi by the side of the linga of Manikarneswara close to the main linga of Srikalashateeswara.

Accompanied by Parvathi, the Lord emerged from the linga and laid the head of Neela on his lap and gently stroked her body. She was still unconscious. The Lord told Parvati, "In her previous birth, she was a learned brahmin. In this birth she was a great yogini, who learnt Bhramavidya from Emperor Janaka. Her pride brought her downfall and by the grace of Agastya she gets her redemption". As the Lord whispered Pranava in her right ear she breathed her last and attained salvation. (Appendix II)

Lord Siva as Manikarneswara whispers Pranava in the right ear of persons in their last moments and grants salvation. So Srikalahasti is also known as Dakshina Kasi.

Chapter 31 and 32 of Sthalapurana.

Tatha pyanugrahadewa | Tarunendu sikhaamane |
Adwaita vaasana pumsaam | Aavirbhavati naanyadha ||

Only by the grace of Chandramouli men can derive the sense of nonduality and not by anything else.

Chapter 13

HARAHARA

Sage Romasa narrated the story of Harahara as follows:

There lived in Kosala a brahmin named Sivadwija. He was highly depraved. He was also a cheat. He assumed a new name, Munjaka and secured the job of a supervisor in the temple of Someswara. He used to steal the jewels of the temple and give them to harlots. The priests of the temple detected his treachery and got him imprisoned. He suffered there for a long time and died a miserable death. Subsequently he took the birth of mean animals several times and was finally born as a hunter called Karabha. Even in this birth he was a savage; so he was discarded by his wife and children. Thereupon he went to remote forests and became a dacoit. He used to administer sedatives and poison to various travellers and rob them of their possessions. He lived for a hundred years and finally fell in a well and died. His soul was condemned to that part of the hell called Athighora the abode of eternal torture.

One day a sage named Sananda visited Yamaloka to see Lord Yama. Yama received the sage with due honours and worshipped him. The sage expressed his desire to see the suffering sinners in the hell. The sage took pity on them and uttered the Sacred Panchaksharimantra when all of them were released from hell and flew to Kailasa to the astonishment of Yama. Then the sage enquired if there were any worse sinners in hell. Yama produced Karabha as the worst of the sinners and gave a full account of his bad deeds. Sage Sananda uttered the words "Hara Hara" in a high pitch of voice. The sinner took it as a great mantra and considered the sage as a guru as gracious as Lord Parama Siva himself. He felt blessed in the presence of the sage and prostrated before him. The sage said that he would be born as a brahmin named Harahara in the sacred Dakshinakailasa.

There he would create an ashrama and a teertha and install a Siva Linga, all named after him. The sage also explained the meaning of the words Hara Hara. Uttering the word Hara once would redeem a person of the sins acquired in the course of several births. By the utterance of the word Hara for the second time one would get rid of the misery of samsara and get out of the cycle of births and deaths. Karabha paid obeisance to Yogi Sananda and left Yama loka. Yamadharmaraja praised the yogi for his concern for the sinners. Then the sage presented privately the garland of one hundred names of Srikalashateeswara known as the Satanamabjamala (see Appendix III) to Lord Yama who gratefully received it.

Subsequently Sage Bharadwaja wanted to know about the next birth of Karabha. Sage Romasa continued :-

In Dakshina Kailasa there lived a great devotee of Lord Sankara by name Susheela. He belonged to Srivatsa gotra and was well versed in Sivaagama. He married Priyamvada of Vasista gotra. She was the daughter of Sivarata who was a great scholar and an expert in the worship of Lord Siva. Priyamvada was equal to Lopamudra in devotion. Susheela and Priyamvada meticulously observed Grihasta Dharma, observed several austerities and performed several vratas invoking Parameswara. He offered his all to Sankara and devoted all his time singing His praise. But he was worried as he had no issues. Lord Sankara appeared in his dream and enquired the cause of his dejection. Susheela replied, "By your grace we have everything except a son. The vedas declare that one's indebtedness to his ancestors will be cleared only by begetting a son. They exhort 'Atmavai Putra namasi'. Thus son is verily the father of man. Son is the cause for one's success. A grandson ensures immense happiness, and a great grandson will secure a place in the bright Surya Loka. We feel unfortunate in not having a son. We do not know what sin we have committed". The Lord said "Three births

ago you were the king of Kalinga and she was your second wife. When she was killing the child of your first wife out of sheer jealousy you were an accessory, mutely witnessing the ghastly scene. That is the cause for your childlessness. In order to beget a son you meditate the HaraHara mantra for three years when your desire will be fulfilled".

Recollecting what Parameswara told him in the dream, Susheela and his wife began the japa of the sacred mantra. At the end of the third year Lord Siva beckoned the Pramadhagana (Karabha) who was redeemed by Yogi Sananda and asked him to be born as the son of Priyamvada and Susheela in order to get mukthi. In due course the pious couple were blessed with a son.

They named him Trikalagna Sagara. When he grew up, they performed his upanayanam and invested him with the sacred thread. After the demise of his parents, Trikalagna gifted away all his possessions to the devotees of Siva. He chose a solitary place in Kailasagiri six miles to the east of the Vayulinga called Mitrakshetra. In that place there was a Swayambhoo Sivalinga worshipped by Siddhas. With single minded devotion, subsisting on mere water and always uttering the HaraHara mantra he performed puja for over fifty years. On the seventh day of the bright moon of Magha masa the Lord along with Parvati appeared before him mounted on His faithful Nandi accompanied by several gods and ganas. Trikalagna who was now called HaraHara prostrated before the Lord and requested Him to grant the following boons :

"This linga, hitherto worshipped by Siddhas, as well as the teertha used by me may be named after me. Those that worship the linga by loudly uttering 'HaraHara' should be blessed with Sayujya Mukti". The boons were granted. After being worshipped by Indra and other gods the Lord disappeared in the Harahara Linga.

Romasa concluded the narration by emphasising that the persons who take bath in the HaraHara teertha and worship the linga would certainly obtain Sayujya Mukti or final liberation.

Chapter 33 and 34 of sthalapurana

Yasya smritya sarva papougha naasho |
 Yatpujato ghora samsara naashaha |
 Yasyastutya mukhtirapaiva soyam |
 Neelagreevah paatumaam adi dhukam ||

Oh blue throated Siva! A mere thought of Thee cleanses our sins, worship of Thee uplifts us from the dreadful samsara and by praising Thee we get release from the cycle of births and deaths. Please save us from eternal misery.

[SIVARAHASYA KHANDAM]

Chapter 14 MAYURA

Bharadwaja requested Romasa Maharshi to narrate the story of the Kerala brahmin Mayura.

Romasa began:

In the kingdom of Kerala, there lived a great scholar by name Suhamsa. His wealth exceeded five lakhs. He had a wicked son called Mayura who was a personification of all vices. He used to squander his father's money on unscrupulous persons and women of disrepute. He led an irresponsible life. In his twenty fifth year he murdered his father, when he was asleep, in order to acquire all his wealth. To escape punishment, he pretended innocence, wept bitterly and performed his father's funeral rites in all

solemnity. Thereafter he continued to revel in his old habits and spent most of the wealth. When he grew fifty years old, he noticed signs of old age on his body and began to contemplate on his past deeds. What did he gain by killing his father and by squandering the wealth in sinful acts? Remorse and repentance filled his mind. Fear overtook him. As he was pensively immersed in such thoughts, his purohit Chandraka visited him.

Mayura received him with due hospitality and lamented, "I am a great sinner. All my bad deeds weigh heavily on me. For the sake of money, I have killed my noble father. I have spent all my youth in the company of loathsome persons. I have indulged myself in wine and women. I have not done even a single good deed but was involved in every conceivable immoral act. How can I wash away my sins? Oh! purohit you are my mother, father and friend. I take refuge in you. Kindly save me". Chandraka was much moved and advised him to visit the various sacred teerthas and to make appropriate gifts after taking bath in each of them. He offered to accompany him to perform the prescribed rites in various places. Both of them set out on teertha yatra.

They visited hundreds of teerthas which included Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvathi, Sindhu, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, Panchaprayagas in the north, Ganga Sagara sangam in the east Dhanushkoti in the south and Pushkara in the west. They covered the entire Bharata Varsha, took bath in all the sacred rivers, lakes and sea-shores, observed fasts, performed ceremonies to propitiate Gods and (manes) Pithrudevathas and made enormous gifts to brahmins and pious people. In spite of all these visits Mayura could not gain peace of mind. Finally they reached a place called Nageswara, ten miles to the east of Chandrasaila. There two serpents named Kambala and Aswatara worshipped Lord Shiva and became his ear rings. There they took bath

in the Sacred Swarnamukhi. As luck would have it, they beheld at a distance a lofty mountain peak amidst a thick forest. On seeing this a radiance dawned upon the faces of Mayura and his purohit. And his purohit experienced a strange tranquility. The purohit exclaimed with joy. "This mountain must be Dhashina Kailasa the cosmic form of Lord Siva. It has several Siva lingas in it and the very sight of it ensures tranquility and bliss". As they marched towards the mountain they lost sight of it. They found themselves amidst a thick forest.

They struggled hard to find their way out. Paramasiva wanted to test their sincerity and steadfastness. He summoned his rare Shakti (Maya) called Ajay and gave him necessary instructions. Suddenly they saw at a distance a huge elephant rushing towards them trumpeting furiously. It swirled the branches of the trees and trampled every thing on its way. It looked fierce like Rudra at a time of Pralaya. Chandraka was mortally afraid. He thought that a clever man should somehow save his life in the face of such a danger and instantly decided to run away. Abandoning his trusted companion he bolted away with some of the money and precious stones of Mayura. On the other hand Mayura stood there calmly and offered his prostations to the fierce elephant. By the time he opened his eyes after prayer the elephant disappeared.

In its place stood an old brahmin with three lines of vibhudhi smeared on several parts of his body. He wore a white dhoti and holy beads of rudrakshas. His face was calm, with a smile dancing on his lips. Mayura saluted him and said, "O revered one I have never seen you before. On seeing you I obtain peace of mind. I am a brahmin of Kerala who has committed several sins. In my greed I have killed my father and several other innocent persons. I have a lot of money. At the behest of my purohit I have taken bath in several teerthas and made gifts to brahmins. On reaching

this place we saw a mountain peak on the eastern side the sight of which had lightened our hearts. Unfortunately my purohit left me and I am alone. I offer my all and myself to you, Kindly protect me and show me a way out.". The old brahmin was pleased with his renunciation, remorse and surrender and took pity on him. He said, "My name is Pashupathi and I dwell in this region. Every day I take my bath in the river Swarnamukhi and worship the Vayurlinga. Earlier this linga was worshipped by Brahma, Vashista, Agastya and several others. Faith is the only means to achieve success in our efforts. Your purohit had neither faith nor devotion and so he ran away. You follow me ". He took him to Dashkina Kailasa, had him take his bath in Swarnamukhi, made him worship the Vayulinga and led him to a place on the mountain six miles to the south of it. The brahmin in disguise struck the earth with his dhanda (staff) when a small teertha was formed. As instructed by the old man he installed a Siva linga and began to meditate upon it with Siva Astakshari. The brahmin assured Mayura that Kalahasteeswara would bless him after one year. Saying so he vanished. Wonder and sorrow struck Mayura. He ardently worshipped the linga chanting the sacred mantra. One year passed. On a full moon day in the month of Bhadrapada, accompanied by Gnana Prasunamba and several celestials Sri Kalahasteeswara emerged from the linga. He spoke, " O Mayura. You have been purified by taking bath in several teerthas and finally in Swarnamukhi and the Dhanda teertha created by me, by my darshan as an old brahmin and by repeating the Astakshari mantra given by me. Here after this Dhanda teertha and the linga worshipped by you will bear your name. I will be ever present here granting boons to my worshippers. After shedding this mortal coil you will reach my abode.". Mayura shed tears of joy and prayed that the purohit, who left him in distress, be forgiven. What a marvellous change in that worst sinner! A sinner could be a saint here.

Chapters 35- 36 of Sthalapurana.

Bahunatraki muktena yasya bhakti Siva dhrida |
 Mahapapopa papaughai rapi grasto vimutchyate ||
 [Siva Gita I-20]

Even the worst sinner can be redeemed by staunch devotion of Siva.

Chapter 15

BHEEMA THE DUMB POET

Having heard the anecdote of Mayura of Kerala, Sage Bharadwaja requested Romasa to explain the reason for Bheema's dumbness, how he secured the grace of Gnanaprasunamba and how he praised the Goddess after regaining fluency. Romasa began:

There lived in Goudadesa a brahmin called Bheema. He was the son of Viswamara and the grand son of Harihara. Bheema was a great scholar. He visited several sacred places and various ashramas. He had holy dips in hundreds of teerthas. At last he reached Vriddhachalam in the south. There he gained the acquaintance of a devotee of Lord Parameswara called Nathasarma. He was a great lover of books and had a big library of rare books. He was respected by all due to his good qualities. Nathasarma wanted to see Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram. He entrusted his library to his friend Bheema, took leave of him and proceeded to Chidambaram. After worshipping Lord Nataraja he returned to Vriddhachalam. He was grieved to note that several of the rare books of his library were missing. He enquired Bheema if he knew the person who had taken the books. In his greed for the precious books, Bheema pretended innocence and replied that he had no knowledge of the loss. Nathasarma was very much grieved and cursed, "If I am a real devotee of the great God and if my God is

kind to me, the person who stole my books shall become dumb". At once Bheema lost his power of speech. He repented his misdeed. Confessing his guilt he returned all the books appropriated by him. By making gestures he requested his host to pardon him. Nathasarma said that he could only excuse his treacherous act but had no ability to reverse the curse. He asked Bheema to leave the place and seek remedy elsewhere. The dumbman felt miserable and wandered far and wide. At last he met me (continued Romasa) at Srisailam and narrated his story by gestures of hands. I took pity on him and said, "You have cheated a trusted friend and brought this curse upon yourself. Only Lord Siva can save you. I am giving you the powerful mantra of Panchadasakshari. Go to Dakshina Kailasa and worship the imposing Vayulinga after taking bath in the sacred Swarnamukhi. Choose a place closeby, instal a Linga and worship Parambika by repeating the mantra. The necessary rituals and disciplines have to be strictly followed. By the grace of Gnanaprasunamba you will regain your speech in due course". I have also taught him the details of the Sankalpa, Rishi, Chandas, Devata, Beejam, Shakthi, Keelaka, Nyasa and Dhyana sloka relating to the Panchadasakshari as well as the mudras to be displayed at the time of its meditation. I asked him to chant the mantra nine lakh times.

Being well initiated by me, he went to Dakshina Kailasa. After having his bath in the river and worshipping the lustrous Vayulinga and Gnanambika he settled down in Sakthi kshetra two and a half miles to the south of the main linga. He selected a place in the river for his daily ablutions and installed a siva linga and named the teertha and linga after himself. In the august presence of Sage Pippalada, a disciple of Sage Agastya he commenced meditation, scrupulously following the instructions relating to Panchadasakshari. Eight months passed away and on the third day of the bright moon in the month of

Bhadrapada, Devi Gnanaprasunamba appeared before him and conveyed her appreciation of the correct way in which he meditated upon her through her favourite mantra. She declared that the curse of dumbness inflicted upon him by Nathasarma had been vacated by her grace. At last he regained his speech. Bheema made three pradakshinas to the Goddess and prostrated before her. Beautiful verses poured forth from his mouth in praise of the Devi. (see Appendix IV)

"Devi! you dwell in Sri Chakra the omnipotent soverign. In its central place you are seated on a throne whose four legs are Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and Easwara. There you are accompanied by Siva. Your body is shaped by bindu-nada-kala. I worship thee as the root cause of the various sounds, para, pasyanti, madhyama, Vaikhari and as the propounder of pranava. You occupy with different shapes the six chakras of living beings and shine in the thousand petalled lotus sprinkling nectar from the top. River Swarnamukhi adorns you as a garland of pearls. You are the mother of the worlds.

Nityaiswarya prade, Nitye , Nirapaye mahakriye
Mahakameswarankasthe jaya Tripurasundari"

This meaningful prayer pleased the goddess. Seated majestically on her lioness and constantly praised by all gods and goddesses, Sri Gnanaprasunamba gave him the following boons.

1. Those that take bath in your teertha on the third day of bright moon, accompanied by the star Swati, in the month of Bhadrapada will be cured of dumbness.
2. Those who on that day chant Panchadasakshari mantra in the presence of Mukeswara will get all their desires fulfilled.
3. The teertha and the linga would for ever bear the name of Mooka.

After granting these boons Paradevata disappeared. Subsequently Bheema reached me in Srisaila and got mukti (deliverance) in this very birth.

Chapter 37 of Sthalapurana.

Mukam karoti vachalam pangum lamghayate girim |
Yat krupa tamaham vande paramananda Madhavam ||

Oh omnipotent! Thy grace enables the dumb to become eloquent and the lame to cross mountains. Oh Blissful one! My salutations to Thee.

Chapter 16

CHANDRA

Bharadwaja was eager to know the reason for Chandra to perform penance at Srikalahasti. Sage Romasa explained :-

Lord Brahma had entrusted the propagation of human race to Daksha Prajapathi. So Daksha brought forth a number of sons. Sage Narada approached them and taught them the futility of leading a family life. Influenced by the teaching of Narada they all became sanyasis and strove to obtain moksha. Daksha was disappointed and became angry with Narada and cursed him, "You have made my sons abandon worldly pleasures. Each one of them is left without a house to live in and wife to promote the race. So you too go on wandering from place to place with neither a house nor a spouse." Narada accepted the curse as a blessing.

Thereafter the Prajapathi decided to populate the world with the sons of his several daughters. He gave twenty seven of them in marriage to Chandra the sovereign of stars and the rest of them to the other gods. Chandra loved Rohini so dearly that he neglected the rest of his wives. He spent all his time, with Rohini and pleased her in several

ways. He would not even look at the face of the others. These sisters felt dejected and disappointed and complained to their father, "Dear father! our husband is fascinated by Rohini and does not care for us. Why did you marry all of us to one person. Now we are miserable." Daksha felt sorry for them and retained them in his own house.

Somehow, after a long time Chandra went to his father-in-law's house and requested him to send back his wives with him. He expressed his regret for the partiality shown to Rohini and promised to bestow equal attention, love and care on all the sisters. After a lot of persuasion Daksha sent them all with Chandra in the fond hope that they would be happy. But Chandra did not mend his ways. In his infatuation for Rohini, he continued to adore her always. He would not even look at the face of others, nor even think of them. They lived like prisoners in their own home. Learning about the continued ill treatment of his twenty six daughters by their husband, Daksha became wild with rage. The sin of neglecting the properly wedded wives was unpardonable. Earlier Chandra sinned with the wife of his own preceptor. These two sins deserved a fitting curse on his handsome personality. Daksha cursed that Chandra should suffer from leprosy. The cursed Chandra lost his brightness and became a leper detested by one and all. Day by day his lustre faded though it was restored to some extent by grace of Sun's rays. As his original shine was lost as a result of his becoming an ugly leper, Chandra became very sad. Repenting his sinful acts he visited several holy places and took bath in innumerable teerthas. There was no improvement in his condition.

At last providentially he reached Dandakaranya, met Sage Agastya and stood before him hanging his dull and repulsive head in shame. The sage being dear to Lord Siva and a Sarvagna identified his visitor and cognised the reason for his plight. "You have not only neglected your duty as a husband but also sinned against your guru by

covetting his wife. Thereby you incurred the wrath of your father-in-law and brought this curse upon yourself. Now you are repentant and seek deliverance. In the distant south you will find the silvery peak of a mountain famous as Dakshina Kailasa. It was established by Lord Brahma. By its side flows the clear waters of the north flowing river Swarnamukhi brought to earth by me. There stands the luminous linga of Sankara. That is the holiest spot on earth capable of washing away the worst of the sins. The Lord there can be easily pleased by offering a small drona flower or a single bilva leaf. Close to the Vayulinga is a sacred spot known as Prabhasa kshetra with a teertha with the same name. You must go there and meditate upon Srialahasteeswara and gain redemption".

Chandra thanked the Sage, reached Srialahasti erected a small cottage near Prabhasa teertha, lying south west of Vayulinga and worshipped the Lord as instructed by the Sage Agastya. After praying in this manner for a month Lord Kalahasteeswara appeared before him on the third day of the bright moon in the month of Chaitra and relieved Chandra of his leprosy. He regained his former radiance and praised the Lord in gratitude. Thereafter he became the chief of the stars and began to cast his benign moonlight the life force by which crops, trees and herbs thrive.

Chapter 38 of Sthalapurana

Sourastradese visadetiramye |
 Jyotirmayam chandrakalavatamsam |
 Bhaktipradanaya Kripavateernam |
 Tam Somanadham saranam prapadye ||

I take refuge in Sri Somanadha of the beautiful Sourashtra region who wears the crescent and emits transcendental light and is benign to His devotees.

Chapter 17

DAKSHA YAGNA AND THE RAGE

Sage Bharadwaja questioned Romasa, "Dear Sir! why did Daksha Prajapathi bear illwill towards his own son-in-law, Sankara and why did he not invite him for his yagna? Romasa clarified his doubts by telling the following story.

Brahma had created the universe, and entrusted the upkeep of custom and tradition to Daksha Prajapathi. Daksha married Veerini (Prasoothi), the daughter of Manu, the Lawgiver. He had sixty daughters through her. Fiftynine of them were married to gods in heavens. His youngest daughter Sati remained at home.

Daksha Prajapathi ruled the universe with a firm hand. He performed several ceremonies with great pomp. Men and gods vied with one another to be recognised by the Prajapathi. Whenever an occasion arose, they flocked to the sacrifice hall and were impressed by its splendour. Daksha's position was so well established that the gods themselves began to bow down and worship him. He surveyed his dominion with pride and was pleased with what he saw.

In due course, his youngest daughter Sati came of age. She adored Siva and was in love with him. Though her father disliked the ways of the God of Kailasa, he reluctantly gave her away in marriage to him.

One day, a conference was held in the cool atmosphere of the snowclad silvergrey mountains of Kailasa. It was presided over by Sankara with his consort Sati by his side. The conference hall was packed to the full by Gods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Yakshas, Kimpurushas and sages. As the discussions were going on, Daksha entered the hall. He being the son of Brahma, and father-in-law of Sankara, the entire audience stood up and paid their respects to him

individually. But Sankara being ageless would not bow down before the aged Prajapathi even though he happened to be his own father-in-law. The selfcentered and the haughty headed Daksha misunderstood the Lord's motive. He felt highly insulted as Sankara did not even get up from his throne as a mark of respect due to an elder. Siva's behaviour stung Daksha who was not used to being ignored.

The Prajapathi grew angry and made long and heavy strides. The veins on his forehead swelled and throbbed with rage. He began to scream out abuse after abuse on Siva. " It is a shame and a disgrace that I have given my daughter in marriage to you, a wandering begger with ash from cremation grounds smeared all over the body. Your dress is strange and your ways vagrant. You lack manners", he roared in anger. He would have nothing to do with Siva thereafter. He swore vengeance. But Siva ignored all these abuses and remained calm. He was aware that paying obeisance to one inferior to Himself (Daksha) would shorten his life span.

After some time, Daksha arranged for a great yagna to be performed at Kanakhala kshetra. All the Gods and Goddesses were specially invited. So also the sages and the princes all over the world. The only exceptions were Sankara and his consort Sati. The entire place was cleared and well decorated. Beautiful pandals were erected. Pots of gold and silver with ingredients like milk and honey adorned the hall. Elephants, horses and chariots were kept ready for the invitees. Elaborate arrangements were made for the comfortable stay of the celestials and human beings. Animals for the sacrifice were procured.

Fifty-nine daughters of Daksha and their husbands came in advance. They all wore silk garments and precious jewels. Gods and other celestials were hastening to reach the spot. Sati saw their unusual rush towards the earth and came to know about the sacrifice from her maid.

In her mind's eye she saw Daksha's great stately mansion that had been her child-hood home. She wanted to go to the Yagna and requested permission of Siva. He said that it was not proper for her to go there uninvited, but Sati pleaded that a daughter needed no invitation to go to her father's house. Siva pointed out that she was not loved by her father and so not wanted by him. He added, "Your father hates me. As you are my wife, you will not be welcomed". With tears in her eyes and in a low voice Sati said that she longed to see her mother and sisters. At last, Siva unwillingly nodded consent. She could not wait to start. Accompanied by her maid servants and the faithful Nandi, she went to the hall of sacrifice. It was crowded with people. Priests were chanting mantras and pouring out the libations. Vessels of gold and silver stood gleaming like moons and stars. On one side, she recognised her sisters and brothers-in-law well dressed. She saw them nudge each other. She heard them snigger. She ran to the place where her parents sat and prostrated herself at their feet. Daksha turned and opened his eyes wide with anger. His features contorted. He hissed, "You shame-less girl! Who invited you here". As his thought went out to Siva, his face grew red with anger. He began to abuse the absent Siva. Volleys of words poured out from the depths of hatred within him. He continued to rail against Siva spitting out insult after insult. Sati could not bear to hear the abuses. Closing her ears with both her hands, she exclaimed "Siva, Siva". She decided to end her body as Daksha's daughter. She sat down in yoga, controlled her breath and immolated herself in the flames of her yoga. Daksha stood horrified to see the flames engulf her body. Her mother screamed and began to sob wildly. The ceremony ceased and the priests started trembling. People stood dazed.

Nandi rushed towards the corpse panting and weeping. Shaking his horns and calling earth and heaven to bear witness, he cursed, "Inhuman Daksha, your sin shall

not go unpunished". He stood near the body for a minute shedding silent tears and rushed to Kailasa to report the ghasty incident. Sati's maids followed him.

In a moment, Nandi reached the snowy peaks where Sankara was in deep meditation. In a mournful voice he addressed, " Oh Lord, Sati is dead". Siva woke up from his yoga trance and was shocked to learn what happened. His face was grim and drained of blood, white as the ash on his body. He wept bitterly crying out " Sati, dear Sati, gentle Sati, my belevod! What have you done!" He paced slowly up and down. Suddenly his sorrow gave room to anger. His pale face became red and his eyes were burning coal. Restlessly he jumped hither and thither with wild strides. Digging his hand into his matted locks, he drew out a single strand of hair and hit it hard on a rock. With its impact, volcanoes leaped up.

As the flames converged, a being took shape out of their burning fury. He was red-faced and the fires of wrath leaped out of every pore of his mighty body. He wielded a curved sword and innumerable weapons in his several arms. Nandi fell on his knees recognising the new creation as Veerabhadhra the embodiment of Siva's anger. Several demons smaller than Veerabhadhra and yet bearing resemblance to him sprang up from the fires. Their numbers multiplied every second. Veerabhadhra led his army crying "vengeance, blood, death, destruction!".

With the speed of lightning, they reached the cursed spot and savagely set to work, wrecking, burning and destroying. They kicked the vessels, smashed the lamps and destroyed the idols. With coarse weapons, they attacked every one. They dragged out Gods and Goddesses and forced them to their knees. They danced on Indras's head and broke the staff of Yama. Remembering that Bhritu sported his mustache and beard they tore them away. Agni's hands were cutoff and Bhaga's eyes were pierced.

The sacrifice itself took the shape of deer and tried to escape. Veerabhadra mercilessly cut off its head. With a mighty blow of his weighty sword, the head of Daksha rolled on until it fell in the sacrificial fires. At last it was the turn of Surya for he could not hide anywhere. His own brightness betrayed his location. "You Sun, did you not laugh exhibiting all your teeth when Siva was abused?". With these words he slapped on Sun's cheek resulting in the fall of all his teeth. His lustre was also grabbed. All this was accomplished in no time.

Dead silence prevailed. Corpses, scattered vessels and broken idols lay everywhere. At the centre of the hall was the head- less body of Daksha gushing blood. His wife sat mourning by its side. At a little distance lay the body of Sati. The flames had only taken her life, but did not tarnish her loveliness. She lay as if she was sleeping. Nobody knew when Siva arrived and sat by its side shedding silent tears. He sat by the side of Sati's body constantly staring at it. He saw nothing else and heard nothing of the commotion. For him all things had ceased to be. His mind came out of the dark dungeon of grief when he heard Veerini weeping nearby. He turned his eyes and saw the noble lady stand before him begging for her husband's life. Recognising the grey- haired one as the beloved mother of his sweet Sati he whispered, "Let Daksha live ". Then he resumed silence. All of a sudden, Daksha's blood-stained body began to move. His headless trunk rose up with its hands groping blindly. Horrified, nobody knew what to do. The demons were amused. One of them thought that a goat's head would be fit for the headless body. He cut-off the head of the goat that was bleating there and slapped it on to the trunk. Daksha's spirit blinked at the world out of the goat's eyes. His words came in goat's reedy, quavering voice chanting, "Samchamey, mayaschamey, priyanchamey" and so on. The demons screamed with laughter and teased him with their coarse jests.

The hustle distracted the attention of the pensive Siva. Absent-mindedly he turned his head, a smile lingered on his pale lips. Gods and Sages expressed their sorrow and bade farwell to Siva. He noticed the lack of staff in Yama's hand and asked him to take another. He saw Brighu without his beard and said he would be endowed with a goat's beard. He had a word for a few other gods and sages. The Sun God was standing at a little distance with his head cast downwards. He used to frequently caress his cheek. All his shine had gone and his mouth was toothless. As his heat had gone he shivered. Siva took pity on him, "Have flour for your food hereafter, but you must get back your brightness and heat for the welfare of the world. To regain them you go to Dakshina Kailasa and worship my Vayulinga. Repent and perform penance. You will get your redemption there.". The Sun god did as he was advised. Daily he took bath in a teertha close to Vayulinga and performed abhisheka with its waters. At last Siva appeared before him and restored not only his brilliance but also his power. He consented to Sun's request to use for his daily abhisheka the waters of the well used by him by naming it Suryapushkarini.

The Sun God was much pleased and went away to the high skies to discharge his duties. Years later, Sati was born as Parvathi, the daughter of Menaka and Himavan and married Lord Siva.

Chapter 39 of Sthalapuranam and Sati khandam of Sivapuranam.

Note: Even to this day the waters of the Suryapushkarini near the western gopuram of the temple are used for the worship of the Vayulinga in Srikalahasti. There is an imposing idol of Sri Veerabhadra in a village called Singamala close to Sri Kalahasti.

Kriyadaksho Dakshah kratupatir adhishas tanubhritaam |
 Rishinaam arthvijyam Saranada sadasyah suraganaah |
 Kratubhramsah twattah kratu phala vidhanavysaninae |
 Dhruvam kartuh sraddha viduram abhicharaya hi makhah ||

[SIVA-MAHIMNAH STOTRAM - 21]

Daksha Prajapati maha makha nasanaya
 Yogaya yoganamitaya namashivaya

Thou giver of refuge ! Even the sacrifice where Daksha Prajapati, expert in sacrifices, was the sacrificer, rishis were the priests, Gods were the supervisors, was destroyed by Thee, though Thou art bent upon giving fruits of sacrifices. Absence of devotion to Thee is surely injurious to the sacrificer.

I bow to Thee, O Siva! the great yogi ever engrossed in Yoga.

Chapter 18

REDEMPTION OF DEVENDRA

Subsequently Sage Romasa narrated the episode of Devendra : It was the court of that lust crazy Devendra in Swargaloka. He was seated in his beautiful peacock throne. The court was full with all the gods seated in their appropriate places. The occasion was Rambha's dance performance. She was accompanied by several gayakas, vainikas and players on Dumdhubhi, damaru, mridanga, veena, conch and cymbals. The music provided was remarkable for alliteration, resonance and dance rythm. In addition to the beauty of her form and the great sheen of her body, Rambha had mastery over the art itself - in the fourfold abhinaya, thirty two varieties of hand movements, eighteen modes of glances, six stances, three fold movements, eight flavours tripartite musical rythm and other factors.

Various emotions were blooming forth as she danced with new and ever new aesthetic creations of dance. After giving a few recitals of nritya and natya she embarked upon tandava and lasya alternately. With the thunderous stamp of feet, swift whirling of hands and glances bubbling with volcanic fire, to the accompaniment of banging of large drums, rattling of damaru and shrill blowing of conch, Rambha's tandava was driving terror into the hearts of the on-lookers. Suddenly the blaring music gave way to the melody of samagana, soft notes of veena and the sweet sound of flute as she switched over to lasya with graceful movements of limbs and endearing glances of eyes. In swift succession she would change from tandava to lasya and vice versa. The audience was spell bound. Above all, Indra was all eyes and ears for the performance. When the dance was in its highest pitch, Devaguru Bhrihaspathi entered the court hall. Even though informed about the arrival of the venerable one, Indra's attention could not be diverted. Naturally Brihaspathi felt insulted and left the place cursing Indra to lose his kingdom for his arrogance. The priest disguised himself as an ordinary person and left for bhuloka. As soon as the dance was over the chief of gods came to know the curse and disappearance of his mentor. Neither he nor his devas could trace their guru.

Demons, the eternal enemies of devas, came to know about the happenings in Devaloka. Taking advantage of the situation they easily conquered the Gods and drove away Devendra from Swargaloka. Poor chief of Gods left his wife Sachi Devi in the cave of Mount Meru. He then went to Brahmaloka, prostrated before the four headed God and narrating his sad story, sought his blessings for over-coming the difficulty. Brahma took pity on him and said, "Those who insult venerable persons are sure to lose their prestige and possessions. You cannot find Brihaspathi now. You have to approach the three headed Viswarupa, son of Twastra, and the nephew of the demons who is now

in Pariyatra hills. He alone can help you at present Be cheerful". Accordingly Indra met Viswarupa confessed his follies and requested him to accept the priesthood of the angels. The three headed Viswarupa agreed to obey the orders of Brahma. With his blessings Indra vanquished his enemies and regained his paradise.

Not satisfied with this victory. Indra now wanted to gain permanent peace for his clan by totally eliminating the demon race. For this purpose he requested his new priest to perform a yagna. As these two were preparing for the Yagna, the demons scented the forth coming disaster to their race. They approached Twastra, the father of Trisira, and requested him to save them from extinction. Twastra sympathised with them. Promising to help them he met his son and reminded him that the enmity between the Devas and Asuras was an eternal one. He pointed out that it was improper for him to cause the destruction of asuras. He instructed his son to see that a portion of the havis (offering) reach the demons so as to save their lives. As duty bound Trisira agreed to obey his father. The Yagna began in all solemnity; but to the astonishment of Devendra not even a single foe of his was eliminated. Somehow he came to know the secret design of his priest in sending a portion of the offering to his foes. He became furious and cut off the three heads of his new priest with a single stroke of the Vajrayudha. By committing this heinous crime Indra lost all his lustre. The demons once again occupied the paradise and drove away its chief. His sins haunted him. Once again Indra left his wife Sachi Devi in the cave of mount Meru and went to Brahma. He offered prayer to Brahma and explained the helpless situation in which he was placed. If only he could get back his priest Brihaspathi all his troubles would come to an end. He requested Brahma to indicate the means of winning back the grace of his mentor. Lord Brahma sympathised with him and said, "The worship of Siva is the only way out for all miseries.

Go to Dakshina Kailasa on the banks of the holy Swarnamukhi, as that is the place very dear to Siva. You worship the unique Linga there devotedly. The Lord will be pleased and fulfil your desire".

Immediately he reached the sacred place, took bath in the river and worshipped the Vayulinga there. Three miles to the east of if he met several sages, created a holy pond and installed a linga as instructed by them. Shedding all his ego he offered prayers devoutly with thousands of bilva leaves. After a few years the Great God, Mahadeva appeared before him in all his glory. He was accompanied by Parvati, Karthikeya and Ganapati. The Lord said, 'I am pleased with your sincere prayers. Ask for the boons and they will be granted". Indra's joy knew no bounds. He praised the Lord and asked him to facilitate the darsan of Brihaspathi. In a moment the Devaguru appeared there. Lord asked Brihaspathi to excuse Indra and continue his priesthood in Swarga. Further the Lord Siva declared that who so ever bathes in the Vajra teertha created by Indra and worship the Vidweswara linga installed by him on the second day of the bright half of Chitra would get their wishes granted. Siva disappeared Brihaspathi and Indra returned to Swarga. The demons were vanquished and Indra gained back his sovereignty.

Chapter 40 of Sthalapurana.

Bahunaa kimuktena slokardhena vadamyaham |
Brahmahatyao satamvapi Sivapujaa vinaasayeth ||

Why so many words? I will tell you in one sentence, "Worship of Siva will obliterate even the sins acquired by murdering hundreds of Brahmins".

[BRAHMANDA PURANAM]

a long time before your sins are washed off". Cursing their lot they descended to earth.

Bharadwaja requested Romasa to intimate how the curse of the Lord had its course. Romasa continued :

Mayadevi had three sons named Surapadma, Simhavaktra and Taraka and a vile daughter called Ajamukhi. The three brothers performed a special ceremony (Veerayaga) and pleased Sankara, who granted them special powers. With their might they conquered all the worlds except Kailasa. Their sister was an adultress. She procured beautiful women of heaven and earth and offered them to her brothers to enjoy. She used to forcibly drag handsome men to satisfy her lust. Once she could seduce and copulate with Sage Durvasa as a result of which Harivaktra and Gadaketu were born as Vatapi and Ilvala. These two brothers obtained several boons from Gods and began to harm humanity. They were fond of human flesh and intoxicating drinks. They would not even spare brahmins as their flesh satisfied their appetite. Their tricks with Sage Agastya were however, not successful. In the process they both died.

Later they were reborn as the sons of Panchamedhra and Sarama. These demons were called Raktapa and Madyapa. They used to deceive sages by offering drinks. One sage named Putimasha was also offered an intoxicating drink. He scented their mischief and cursed them to become Palmyra trees. They were afraid and requested the sage to indicate some way out. The sage took pity on them and said, "You were devotees of Sankara and lived as Ganas in Kailasa, You both deceived the Lord and stole a secret mantra resulting in the curse to be born as demons. You will offer prayer to Siva as Palmyra trees a little to the northeast of Vayulinga for some years and will be consigned to flames in front of that linga on the full moon day of the month of Karthika. Then you will regain your divinity and go back to Kailasa".

They hastened to Srikalahasti and became Palm trees and awaited their redemption.

Chapter 41 of Sthalapurana

Note: Actually there were two palmyra trees adjacent to the northeast part of the temple. The trees fell down a few years ago and were consigned to flames.

Vedante paramam guhyam purakalpa prachoditam |
Na prasantaya datavyam na putraya sisshyaya va punaha ||

The great secrets expounded in Vedas should not be taught to fickle minded persons even if they are your own sons or disciples.

Chapter 20

TRIPURA SAMHARA

At the behest of Bhardwaja, Romasa began to narrate the story of Tripurasuras who attained release during Tretayuga.

Lord Subramanya fought with the mighty demon Taraka, killed him in an extraordinary battle and adopted his cock and spear as his own symbols. Taraka's son also lost his life in the battle. There after Taraka's grandsons named Vidyunmali, Tarakaksha and Kamalaksha performed penance invoking the blessings of Lord Brahma. After several years Brahma appeared before them and asked them as to what they wanted. They bowed and requested the God to grant them eternity. The Lord said that all the living beings should die one day or other. As this wish could never be granted, he asked them to ask for something else. They thought for a while, consulted among themselves and fearing no harm from Lord Siva, being His disciples, they requested Brahma, "Gracious Lord! We wish to live in three cities made of gold, silver and steel that should ever be

revolving up in the skies. Our cities should meet for a while only once in thousand years. Our cities should be destroyed by one mounted on a chariot which is not a chariot, by a bow which is not a real bow. The arrow should not be a normal arrow and it should simultaneously destroy all our three cities with one stroke. Thus should our end come only in that grand manner. Kind Lord, be pleased to grant us these boons." Brahma nodded and said, "So be it."

The demons' joy knew no bounds. With the help of the great architect Viswakarma they had three splendid cities built of gold, silver and steel that would be revolving in the skies. Each one was spacious, with beautiful houses, grand temples for Siva and lovely gardens. Priests were always chanting Vedic hymns and performing sacrifices enjoined in the Vedas. The three brothers occupied one each and travelled fearlessly above all the three worlds. The speed of the new cities caused panic in the hearts of men and gods alike, for the demons destroyed anything they fancied. Every moment was a precarious one for all.

All gods went to Brahma who pleaded his inability to kill them. They went to Sankara who flatly refused to oblige them. He said, "They are my staunch Bhaktas. I will never raise my little finger against my dear devotees. Go to Vishnu. He is cunning and may show a way out." The helpless Gods then went to Vaikunta and submitted their plight. Vishnu promised to help them in course of time. He created Arihanmuni and asked him to draft a new code of conduct denouncing Vedic methods and extolling wealth and worldly pleasures. Soon the sage appeared before Vishnu with his head completely tonsured. He held a bundle of peacock feathers in his hand and submitted his treatise to Vishnu. It was awesome in its rhetoric. It was capable of distracting people and creating confusion in them. Anybody would fall prey to the catchwords coined by the sage. Vishnu appreciated, "The glamour of your preachings is irresistible. The three Demons will easily fall

prey and will dig their own graves. Just wait, I will arrange for your proper introduction." Then Vishnu called his favourite devotee and gave him appropriate instructions. With his head completely shaven and holding a bundle of peacock feathers Narada first went to the golden city of Vidyunmali. He neither held Veena nor did he praise Narayana. He entered the court of the demon uttering "Hail Vidyunmali of the golden city, *Ahimsa Paramo Dharmaha*". Vidyunmali was shocked to see Narada in his new attire and the new words on his lips and exclaimed, "How strange you look, holy sage! What has come upon thee? For the first time I see you without your Tripundra mark on your forehead and other parts of your body." He was really anxious to know the cause at once. Narada explained, "Oh mighty King, I came across a wonderful sage in Vaikunta. He is preaching an entirely new code of conduct. I realised that we have been fools all these days. His philosophy is real and beneficial. So have I changed and feel quite happy now". The magic worked upon the demon and he was anxious to meet this great redeemer of miseries. Narada assured him that the redeemer would visit him shortly.

And Arihanmuni visited the golden city delivering his new sermon. He was accompanied by four of his disciples. All of them had their heads tonsured and held peacock feathers in their hands. The new sage wandered from street to street and preached his new doctrines from every corner. People were inspired and gathered in large numbers. They were attracted by their simplicity and sweet words. The demon king was very happy to hear the news. He personally went to one corner of the city to welcome him and his disciples. The king pleaded that he had already known the greatness of the sage through Narada and longed to become his first and foremost disciple. The sage agreed and began his sermon.

"The whole life is a misery. Everybody born is destined to die. In spite of this people commit sinful acts

and hope to get redemption by performing ceremonies and sacrifices. They do not hesitate to cause harm to others and cause bloodshed. They are prepared to kill even their kith and kin. Can their sins be washed away by sacrificing goats? Can their domains increase by killing horses and other animals in the name of God?. Nonviolence is the greatest of good deeds *Ahimsa paramo dharmaha*. Similarly one should not tell lies. They should be true to their own conscience. *Satyam vada*. There is no God higher than truth. No doubt man has many wants. He should satisfy them in the right way. Enjoy by all means but adhere to righteousness. *Dharmam Chara*. The epics extol every blood thirsty, revengeful merciless person as an avatar, an incarnation of God and a protector. One should have compassion. Once again, no again and again I declare that no God can be pleased by violent methods. *Ahimsa paramo dharmaha*. Be kind to every living being. Serve mankind. Do not blindly follow conventions. Think rationally and apply your mind". The Sage explained his philosophy to the demon king and further elaborated it.

No doubt the king and his subjects were converted. They at once discontinued sacrifices and other vedic practices. Gods were pleased. They all went to Kailasa and appraised Siva of the new developments in the three cities. He felt sorry for His old devotees and cursed the fate that brought about the change. In fact all the Gods were also animals (pasus) and He being their Lord (Pasupati) had to protect them. He also foresaw that the conjunction of the three cities at the end of the thousand years was nearing and felt the cities were doomed. He reminded the Gods of the boons obtained by the demons from Brahma and asked them to provide him with necessary equipments. The entire celestial world was behind Siva in every form, but in an impossible situation. The earth was the chariot which bore Him, the Sun and Moon were the wheels under it. Brahma was the charioteer. Vedas were the horses yoked to the car.

Mount Meru was the bow with serpent king Vasuki as its string. Vishnu himself in conjunction with fire (Agni) was the arrow aimed at the Tripuras. All the gods were there ready individually to help him.

Siva proceeded against the three demons with this strange array of arms and equipment. He waited for the moment when their cities gathered. Siva became a Rudra, spilling terror, and stood on His chariot brandishing different weapons in His innumerable hands. He made powerful strides and finally stood like an archer in *alidha* pose, with His right knee advanced and the left retarded. His main left hand was stretched to hold the weighty bow, His right hand was stretched to hold the flaming arrows. His entire figure pulled itself away from the target towards which the arrow pointed. The very flames at the tip of the arrow seemed to perform tandava dance of destruction in their eagerness to consume the cities. The jata makuta with its Crescent Moon reinforced the backward pull of Siva's head, with its long, intent and furious face. The slant of the arrow and bow wielding arms in one direction and the pull of His body in the opposite terrified the onlookers. His enormous body radiated heroic energy and He was ready to strike.

At that moment Vijayalakshmi, foretelling success, came there and praised Siva. Vishnu, who formed the arrow about to be released, was visibly annoyed as she was all praise for Siva.

Noticing Vishnu's annoyance Siva at once discarded the bow and arrow and opened His third eye. The flames emanating from it struck like a flash of lightning, scattered all over, on the wide expanse of the brazen castles and edifices and reduced them to a handful of ashes. In sheer ecstasy Siva danced the dance of victory in the expression of His might.

All the Gods and Sivaganas joined Him in the dance. Kinnaras provided the music. Again Vijayalakshmi came and praised the triumph of the Lord.

Vishnu, whose annoyance was doubled only stood helplessly in a corner of the arena. Siva was angry with him for not cooperating with Him in the critical moment and cursed him to lose his Sabhapatitwa and Sarvavanditwa. Narayana then realised his mistake. Being aware of his present plight, he expressed remorse and prayed for pardon. The Great God showed him a way out. He should go to Dakshina Kailasa on the banks of Swarnamukhi and perform penance. Narayana obeyed. He selected Bhukarnakshetra near Vayulinga offered prayers~ and performed sereve tapas. At last Lord Siva appeared before him as Ardhanareeswara and crowned him as Sabhapathi in the presence of Gods. The power of protection was also restored to him. All the gods praised Vishnu and extolled the magnanimity of Lord Sankara. Regaining his original status Vishnu worshipped Srikalahasteeswara and left for Vaikunta.

Chapters 42 and 43 of Sthalapurana

Radhah Kshoni Yanthaa Sathadhritiragandro dhanuradho |
Radhamge Chandraarkow Radhacharanapaanih Sara iti |
Didhakshoste koyam Tripura-trunamaadambara vidhi |
Rvidheyaih kridanthyo na khalu paratantraah Prabhudhiyah ||

[SIVA MAHIMNAH STOTRAM - 18]

When Thou wanted to burn the three cities which were but a piece of straw to Thee, the earth was Thy chariot, Brahma Thy charioteer, the great mountain Meru Thy bow, the sun and moon the wheels of Thy chariot, Vishnu Thy arrow why this paraphernalia? The Lord is not dependent on others - He was sporting with things at His command.

The prayer rendered by Sri Vishnu is given in Appendix V.

Chapter 21

PRANAVAM

Sage Romasa continued with another episode:

Accompanied by His consort Parvati, Lord Siva was seated on a beautiful throne in Kailasa and was giving audience to His devotees. Several Gods, yakshas, kinnaras, and other celestial beings were rushing to Kailasa to have His darsan and receive His blessing. They were led by Hari, Brahma and Indra. On their way to Kailasa every one used to worship Guru Guha, Son of Siva, and with his permission go to Kailasa. But the haughty headed Brahma considered Guru Guha only as a small boy much inferior to him in learning. Ignoring Guru Guha, Brahma went straight to Kailasa to worship Mahadeva. While returning also all the Gods saluted Subrahmanya, but Brahma bypassed him with disrespect. Consequently the six faced Guha felt insulted and wanted to punish the four faced God. He therefore ordered his servant to fetch Brahma before him. When he was brought, Shanmukha said, "You impertinent Virinchi! You seem to think that you are all knowing. Will you prove it by answering my question in the presence of Sages?". Brahma was so confident about his own knowledge that he immediately agreed. Soon a meeting was arranged in which Shanmukha asked Brahma to explain the characteristics of the Vedas and the meaning of Pranava. Brahma tried to recollect the meaning of Pranava but in vain. Skanda became very angry and said, "Oh! Virinchi! you think too much of yourself. You are not capable of assessing the worth of others. Hereafter you will possess, only mediocre Rajasic behaviour. You will lose discriminating powers".

Guru Guha knew that Brahma could not answer his question, for he had already lost the special significance of Pranava due to a curse. It happened like this. Once the

sages approached Brahma and requested him to explain the form of Pranava, which is the essence of all the four Vedas. Brahma said that he himself represented Pranava. The sages were not convinced and requested Vedas to manifest themselves and elaborate the point. Accordingly all the four Vedas personified themselves before the gathering.

Rig Veda said, "The great God by whom this whole universe is created and by whom all the animate and inanimate objects were enveloped is indeed Pranava". "That which after obtaining the blessings of Lord Parameswara leaves nothing else to be desired is Pranava", added Yajurveda. Samaveda elaborated by saying, "He by whom the whole world is motivated, in whom the whole universe is contained, whose attributes the sages long to realise - Indeed He is Pranava". Finally, Adharva Veda declared, "The Lord of Sacrifice, the seer, the omnipotent the invisible, pure conscience SadaSiva is Pranava". Even though all the vedas declared in so many words that Lord Mahadeva represents Pranava, the adamant Brahma persisted that he was Pranava himself. Then Pranava itself manifested before the gathering and in angry words addressed as follows:-

"Oh Paramesti! Even though the vedas have elaborated the paratatwa i.e.(the essentials of knowledge). you are only indulging in self aggrandisement. He, from whose breath the Vedas have emanated, He, by whom the whole creation is caused; He, who is pervading the entire Universe, He, who is the cause of your very existence, the ordainer, the pure, the omnipotent, the all powerful, one without beginning or end, the great God Sankara Himself is Pranava Swarupa. No body else". In spite of this elaborate declaration Brahma would not yield. Then Pranava in sheer disgust ordained that Brahma would never be able to conceive the true form of it. Skanda was quite aware of this incident when he questioned Brahma about it. He failed in the test.

Cursed first by Pranava and later by Skanda, Brahma lost his power of discrimination and became sad. Seeing his plight his wife Saraswathi sat by his side and encouragingly said, "Oh dear! I see you are depressed. Please do not lose heart. How have you forgotten that you have acquired the power of creation by the grace of Lord Siva by performing tapas at Dakshina Kailasa. You go there again and perform penance, for the merciful Siva will redeem you from the curses and rid you of your misery. He will grant you all the boons you may ask". Brahma consented.

Accordingly he went to Dakshina Kailasa and performed tapas invoking Siva's grace. He worshipped the Vayu Linga for several days. Siva was pleased and wanted to help him. As soon as He thought of Skanda, His son appeared, prostrated and enquired what was required of him. Lord Siva pointed out that there was absolutely no difference between himself and Skanda. Any insult or praise for the one was equally applicable to the other. "Now that Brahma repents and is performing penance invoking me I feel like saving him from the curses. I hope you are agreeable."

Skanda said, "Will I ever disagree with your decision? Dear father, you know what is the right course. He took leave of his father. Accompanied by Gnanambika the Lord appeared before Brahma and blessed him with the true knowledge of Pranava and absolute devotion to Himself.

Chapters 44 and 45 of Sthalapurana.

Pranava dhyana saktaya | Sivaya pranamatmane |
Srikalahastinadhaya | pranaamostu Bhavayate ||

By incessant contemplation on Omkara Thou hast become Pranava itself. Oh Lord of Srikalahasti ! thou art Bhava. I prostrate before thee

spot and began the worship as instructed. She chose a place in the river Swarnamukhi for her daily ablutions. Observing due formalities, she installed SriChakra close to the Goddess. She contemplated on Parameswari, in Chintamani Griha of Manidweepa, surrounded by the ocean of Amruta (nectar). She set her mind on the Manidweepa comprising nine prakaras of nine metals, like copper, silver and gold, with several divine trees, bearing delicious fruits and fragrant flowers. Beyond, there were regions of nine gems, like Pushyaraga, Indraneela and Manikya, where even the trees yielded gems. Crossing these localities her thoughts pondered over nine chakras, such as Thrailokya Mohana, Sarvardha Sadhaka and Sarvasidhiprada. All these regions were presided over by different Goddesses who were served by innumerable maids. Finally, her mind rested on the innermost apartment of Sri- Chakra, enclosed by three square-shaped Prakaaras, having well gaurded gates on its four sides. Inside these, were circles, lotuses and triangles. The centre of Sri Chakra was the Bindu, where Parameswari sat in all her splendour on the lap of Parameswara.

Lakshmi offered flowers, fruits and camphor with deep devotion. After several years of such ardent prayer, Sri Gnana Prasunambika, manifested herself from the Sri Chakra and stood before her on the fifth day of the bright moon in the month of Vaisaka. Lakshmi shed tears of joy and sang in praise of the Goddess. Parvati said that she was much pleased and she restored her lustre and power. Soon Vishnu appeared on the spot, and accepted Lakshmi and took her to Vaikunta.

Chapters 46 & 47 of Sthalapurana.

Mantraraaja japachaiva | Chakraraajaarchanam tadhaa |
Rahasya naama paatascha | Naalpasya tapasah phalam ||

The japa of the king of mantras, the worship of the king of Chakras and the recital of the occult names (Lalita) are fruits of no little tapas.

Chapter 23

GURUGUHA

Sage Bhardwaja requested Sage Romasa to narrate how Shanmuga became the preceptor of all. Romasa explained:

Oh Bhardwaja! once, when Lord Siva was having one year old boy Skanda on his lap in the thousand pillared hall in Kailasa, Parvathi requested Him to explain the meaning of Pranava, which is the source of Vedas. As He was giving a discourse on Pranava, this boy Skanda had also grasped the instructions. With its potency he could conquer all the demons and came to be known as Sivaswami. In due course Skanda prostrated before his father and entreated Him to impart knowledge in different branches and make him proficient so as to occupy Vidya Peeta and become Sarvadesika capable of teaching any subject. Lord Siva smiled and observed that he had acquired the meaning of Pranava without undergoing the necessary discipline of a pupil. So he should return this to Him in a different way. He asked His son to go to Dakshina Kailasha and perform penance, where Sage Sumedha established a teertha known as Vedahvaya and performed japa of Pranava. There Pranava would become a lotus pond, with its Sakthi as a stem and Vedas as leaves. Brahma kanda would be its root and the letters A, U and M its flowers of red, white and dark colours. "you should worship me daily with these flowers. In this way you would return the Pranava to me. I have pointed out the place of your tapas and the means of getting rid of the blemish. Go. In due course I will grant your wish".

From Kailasa Skanda came to earth and reached the spot presided over by the great Vayu Linga and Gnanaprasunambika and where many sages were engaged in tapas. He took bath in the sacred waters and worshipped the Vayu Linga and Gnanambika. Then he went to the

Vedahvaya teertha and was delighted to see the pond with lotuses of three different colours sprouting from a single stem. He established a Siva Linga named Skanda Linga on the hill close by and created a river called Dharmakulya which came to be known as Skanda Teertha. He worshipped the Siva Linga with these rare flowers and performed severe penance for one thousand years. On the fifth day of bright moon of Magha month from the Skanda Linga emerged Lord Siva accompanied by Parvati, Vishnu, Brahma, other Gods and attended by Yakshas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas and Apsaras and offered to grant boons to Skanda. Subrahmanya prostrated before Him and worshipped "oh Lord of lords! master of all the worlds! kindhearted one! I have been purified by worshipping you. The Sankhyas consider you to be passive. Yogis think you are Jagadeeswara while the Upanishads proclaim you as sad. chit ananda. Who can fully comprehend you." Lord Siva was delighted and established a Maha Vidya Peeta on a hillock north east of Vayu Linga, enthroned Skanda as Tatwardha Desika (a preceptor of the various philosophies) and vanished. From that time Skanda came to be known as Guru Guha. He explained the meaning of Pranava to Bramha and the nature of soul to Sri Ramachandra.

From this hillock he enlightens seekers with real knowledge and fulfils the desires of his devotees.

Chapter 48 of Sthalapurana.

Mayuradhirudham mahavakya gudham |
 Manohari deham maha chitta geham |
 Mahadeva devam mahaveda bhavam |
 Mahadevabalam bhaje loka palam ||

I bow down before the beautiful son of Mahadeva, Lord Subrahmanya seated on a peacock, the possessor of the secrets of the great Vedas and the Mahavakyas; the abode of absolute bliss; and the preceptor of Mahadeva Himself.

Chapter 24

SRI RAMA CHARITAM

PART I : DESPONDENCY OF SRI RAMA

Sage Romasa continued :-

For the protection of the sages from the tyranny of Rakshasas, Sri Maha Vishnu incarnated as Sri Ramachandra, the son of King Dasaratha. With the permission of their father, Rama and his brother Lakshmana accompanied Sage Viswamitra to save his Yaga. He learnt several skills from the sage and killed the wicked Tataki and her son Subahu who attempted to disturb the Yaga of the sage. The sage then took them to Mithila ruled by King Janaka. Sri Rama won the hand of Janaka's daughter Sita after breaking the bow of Lord Siva. While returning to Ayodhya with his consort, Rama met the challenge of Parasurama and subdued him. In pursuance of his father's commitment to his third wife, Kaikeyi, Rama had to leave for the forests. Lakshmana and Sita accompanied him despite Rama's plea to them to stay behind. King Dasaratha could not bear the separation from his dear son Rama and passed away soon afterwards.

In order to protect the sages of the Dandaka forests, Rama killed Viradha, Khara and Dushana and their entire army. The Rakshasa king of Lanka named Ravana employed Mareecha to assume the form of a golden deer to lure Sita. She pressed Rama to get it. Rama chased it and killed it. Mareecha while dying cried "Ah Sita, Ah Lakshmana". At the instance of Sita Lakshmana also left to the help of Rama leaving her alone. Then Ravana stealthily abducted Sita and confined her in his garden. Rama made friendship with Sugreeva and killed Vali from behind a tree. Sugreeva's minister, Hanuman traced Sita in Ravana's abode of Lanka.

At this stage Rama met sage Agaṣṭya, narrated his sad plight and told him that he wanted to take revenge on

Ravana by killing him and to take back Sita. After patiently hearing Sri Rama the sage smiled and said, "Whence has this dejection come upon you, oh Rama? You have mastered the Vedas and yet you speak like a lay man. You are identifying your body with the soul. Know that the body is perishable while the soul is immortal. All of us, that is you, I, Ravana, Sita and the entire creation form part of one indivisible Atman. Know that to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can effect the destruction of the Eternal. It slays not, nor is it slain. There is no friend, no enemy. So become a Yogi and practise equanimity. Treat friend and foe alike. Calm yourself, overcome your illusion and give up your errand. Practice Yoga". Sri Rama was not in a position to grasp the message of the sage. He said, "I am a Kshatriya. My blood boils with a passion for revenge. I cannot rest until I kill Ravana who had stealthily carried away my dear Sita. As a true kshatriya I have to do my duty; I must put an end to this evil person. Kindly guide me and bless me with success in my effort." The sage took pity on him and said that success was not possible without the grace of Lord Siva. The means of gaining the grace of Mahadeva are (1) Smearing the body with the holy ashes (2) wearing the Rudraksha beads (3) initiation into Siva Deeskha (4) worship of Siva Linga (5) Japa of Siva Panchakshari (6) Siva sahasranama and (7) Siva Bhakti. So explaining, the sage initiated him into Siva Deeksha. He also gave him the sacred mantra 'Aditya Hridaya'. Rama devoutly worshipped Sankara and by his grace crossed the ocean and vanquished Ravana in a fierce battle. After subjecting Sita to ordeal of fire he took her back to Ayodhya. After the coronation he ruled over his vast mighty empire for a long time. Based on a hearsay he with a heavy heart banished innocent Sita to forest unmindful that she was pregnant at that time. Sage Valmiki picked her up and took her to his ashram where she gave birth to two sons, Lava and Kusa. Valmiki made these boys proficient in every

branch of learning and taught them to sing the Ramakatha. In course of time Sri Rama performed Aswamedha Yaga. Valmiki sent the two children to sing Rama Charitam on the occasion. The sage disclosed the identity of the children and Rama desired that Sita be brought to Ayodhya. However, Sita could not bear the situation. She invoked Mother Earth to rescue her. Having proclaimed her chastity to the world she disappeared deep inside the cavity of the earth. Rama was grieved and continued to rule over his kingdom with a heavy heart and troubled thoughts.

PART II. REMORSE , PENANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF SRI RAMA

Sage Romasa continued to narrate the story of Sri Rama:

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. The poignant scene of his beloved Sita sinking into the bosom of mother Earth haunted him. In spite of being the supreme emperor, Sri Rama had no peace of mind. His own story melodiously sung by his children was ringing in his ears. He began to contemplate on the various incidents connected with his life. Every action of his, appeared to him to contain a tinge of dosha. In the first place, instead of killing the demon Tataki, a woman, he should have deposited her in a remote land as he had despatched her son Maricha. He was required to take aim with the bow of Lord Siva, but he had broken it . He knew fully well that Dasaratha in his heart of hearts did not wish him to go to forest. Yet he went away leaving his father in great distress to die soon afterwards. Rama killed Khara and all the fourteen thousand soldiers of his in order to protect a few sages. Again Vali was no enemy of his. That invincible warrior was treacherously killed by him from behind a tree. Even though the lord of the seas was only discharging his duties Rama threatened to scorch the entire seas and displayed unnecessary fury. For the sake of Sita he wiped out an entire race. Even the innocent Sita was made to undergo the ordeal of fire, later

to be banished to forest in spite of her being pregnant. His conscience pricked to think of the sufferings of noble Sita - his sahadharmacharini. The events of his life disturbed and upset him and made him miserable. Was it not possible for a person of noble birth and good learning to lead a virtuous life, without a blemish? Was there any redemption for his sins?". Then he remembered the Sage Agastya whose valuable advice began to ring in his ears. He began to meditate on Lord Sankara and worship him in the sevenfold manner taught by the sage. The Great God appeared before him and spoke benignly, "Dear Rama ! Arise and shake off your gloomy thoughts. Still you consider that the universe you see around you as real and you are very much attached to it. Now you require enlightenment and tranquility. Go to Dakshina Kailasa on the banks of holy river Swarnamukhi where a graceful symbol of mine stands. In the first place invoke spiritual enlightenment from my son Karthikeya in the hill called Vidya Saila close by. Take bath in the holy river, fast by day, wake by night and worship that unique Linga with tender bilva leaves. Peace will be restored unto you. Leave at once for that venerable spot. Your illusion will be dispelled by the grace of Karthikeya"

Accordingly Sri Rama went to the place referred to and performed severe penance. Shanmukha was pleased and appeared before him. He gracefully touched Rama and blessed him and said that he would reign in comfort and luxury for a long period. But Rama was not enamoured about unreal and temporal pleasures. He requested Subrahmanya to impart him the knowledge of the supreme self. The Lord consented and taught him supreme Self knowledge or Brahma vidya.

"Rama! unborn, eternal, unchangeable, primeval, real, pure, complete, pure knowledge, bliss, immutable, all pervading, pure consciousness, peace, one without a second, the source of everything animate and inanimate, motionless, beyond the reach of thought or word, smaller

than the smallest, bigger than the biggest these are the attributes of the supreme self. The universe appears as if it is in existence. The real is Brahman. The universe is only an appearance. It is a super imposition. Rama! by your deluded mind you are taking this unreal universe which in fact is a superimposition, to be real. You are witnessing a duality which is the root cause of all fears and miseries.

"Paramatma Himself created the entire universe out of the five great elements and entered it. The ego in these objects has come to be known as jeevatma or individual self. Due to the difference in the qualities of the various objects or upadhis difference between various individuals is noticed. This difference is caused only by illusion or maya and so is not real. In reality the self and the supreme self or Jivatma and Paramatma are one and the same. On attaining this knowledge of self, the maya disappears and the individual self is realised as the Supreme self".

Creation of Universe: Skanda then began to teach how the universe was created. He said, "Just as blue colour appears in the clear colourless sky, in untainted Brahman appears maya. This maya has two powers. One which makes existing objects appear as non existing is known as Avarana Sakti or ignorance. This power hides us the vision of Brahman, the paramount principle of entire creation. The other power, which enables the non-existing objects appear as real, is called Vikshepa Sakti which means illusion. Satwa, Rajas and Tamas are the characteristics of this illusion. They are the causes for creation, sustenance and destruction. First ether (Akasa), from it air (Vayu) from air fire (Agni), from it water (Appu) and from water earth (prithvi) were created. By the interaction of these five great elements various manifestations arose.

"Due to the influence of Satwa guna on these five elements the five sense organs namely skin, eyes, ears, tongue and nose were produced. Due to Rajo guna mind (manas), intellect (Budhi), will (chitta) and ego (ahamkara)

as well as the five organs of action namely mouth, hands, legs, anus and the genital organs were formed, out of them emanated the five pranas (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana). Tamo guna coupled with the five fold interaction of elements gave rise to the five sense objects. They are taste, form, touch, sound and smell. All these twenty four principles are technically known as Tatwas".

Then Guru Guha elaborated the nature of causal (Karana), Subtle (sukshma) and gross (Sthula) bodies, presided over by Pragyna, Tyjasa and Vaiswanara in the deep sleep, dream and waking states respectively. "The cosmic consciousness is reflected in the inner self as Jeevatma. Thus Brahman is no other than one's own self and this fact is substantiated by the sayings 'Tat Twam Asi' and 'Isavasyam idam Sarvam'. The term idam (this) represents the whole universe. The tendency is to consider the universe we see around as the ultimate reality. The wise should realise that the entire creation is only a superimposition of illusion on the immutable Atman". This delusion should be discarded and Brahman realised. "Rama! When others see, you behave as if you are the doer but within yourself behave as if you are the non-doer. So also for all outward appearances behave as if you are the doer of all works, but in your heart of hearts be like a mere witness - non-doer. Then neither this kingdom nor Samsara will bind you".

Thus enlightened Sri Rama prostrated before his preceptor and at his behest installed a linga called Sri Kothandarameswara in Valmiki Kshetra about five miles from Sri Kalahasti. He worshipped it and the Vayu Linga. He returned to Ayodhya to rule long over it.

Chapters 49,50 and 51 in Sthalapurana

Naa anyam pasyami bhaishajyam Antarena Vrisha dhvajam ||

I dont see any medicine to cure the disease of samsara other than Lord Siva whose flag has the sacred bull.

Chapter 25

MARKANDEYA

Bharadwaja requested Sage Romasa to narrate how Sage Markandeya performed penance in Dakshina Kailasa and what benefits he derived there from. Romasa narrated as follows:

Once upon a time, Vyasa, Vasista, Pulaha, Kasyapa, Atri, Markandeya, Kabandhi, Gautami, Kanwa and other sages went to Kedara and worshipped Lord Sankara. As they were about to return to their abodes, Sage Markandeya requested the other sages to clear his doubts. "Who is the God, the very thought of whom, redeems the sins of men? Who is the God who can remove fear from the hearts of his devotees?". Each of the sages assembled there had a separate answer. Vyasa said that to the very thought of Lord Sankara's feet would purify the worst sinner and that He was the God who could redeem the fears of men. Vasista disagreed and declared that it was Vishnu. Pulaha said that these two objects could be achieved by worshipping Vidhata. Others said differently by mentioning Indra, Agni, Sun God etc. Sage Markandeya's confusion was more confounded. He felt "*Samsayatma Vinasyati*". A man with doubts has no redemption. He was on the look out for some one who could clear his doubts.

In due course he met sage Agastya. He bowed before him and requested him to clear his doubts. The sage said, "Your doubts are very pertinent. They cannot be cleared by ordinary sages. I will tell you a way out. It is only Lord Sankara, who rescued you from the clutches of Yama, who can clear your doubts. Go to Dakshina Kailasa and meditate. The benign Lord will clarify your doubts". Markandeya was happy and went to Dakshina Kailasa the place directed by sage Agastya. He took bath in the river Swarnamukhi; worshipped Vayu Linga and observed austerities. Next day

he established a hermitage five miles to the South of Vayu linga, in a place known as Mangalayana Kshetra. He installed a Siva linga there, worshipped it with great devotion and started penance. The Lord appeared before him on the first day of the month of Magha. He was accompanied by several Gods and other celestial beings. He was seated on His favourite bull. Lord Sankara said that He was much pleased with his penance and asked what he wanted. Markandeya said that his joy knew no bounds in having the darsan of the Lord and added that he approached several sages for getting his doubts cleared. Different sages gave different answers to him. Parameswara said, "Dear son of Mrikandu ! The panacea for all the sins of people is the constant remembrance of (smaranam) of Gurus's sacred feet. In fact, I myself, Hari, Brahma and other Gods worship Guru's Sacred Feet. You need not have any apprehension about this. (1) One's own father (2) one who performs upanayana and initiates one into the holy order (3) one who is responsible for his learning (4) guardian and (5) one who dispels his fears - these five persons are said to be Gurus. They should be worshipped as Indra, Brahma, Vishnu, Guru and as myself respectively. Trust, as you require the help of a sailor to cross a river in a boat, without the aid of a proper Guru you cannot cross the ocean of Samsara, that is the cycle of births and deaths. Only a Guru can make the most esoteric teachings accessible and relevant. Just as a face appears clearly in a spotless mirror, so in a mind purified by the Guru's initiation, the self shines in all its splendour. Only a Guru can redeem one of all fear, the main obstacle in self realisation. This fact is testified by upanishads such as Prasna and Chandhyogya. Knowledge is most efficient only when it is learned from a Guru. Know Myself as the best of Gurus who can lead others from the darkness of illusion to the bright light of knowledge". Thus getting his doubts cleared, Markandeya saluted the Lord and praised him "Oh, God, dear to Gnanaprasuna, you will

bestow happiness on persons who show even a little amount of devotion to you. You have annihilated Yama. You destroyed Tripuras by just opening your third eye. You wear Crescent Moon and Ganga on your head. You remove the screen of illusion that blinds my vision and save me. In fact you are the preceptor of all preceptors".

The Lord was pleased by the praise rendered by Markandeya and said that Mangalayana teertha would henceforth be known as Markandeya teertha and that he would be ever present in the Linga installed by him to bestow boons on its worshippers. Then Markandeya left the place praising and preaching the glory of Sadasiva.

Chapter 52 of Sthalapurana

Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gururddevo Maheswaraha
Guru satchat Parabrahma tasmai Sri Gurave namaha ||

Guru is Brahma; Vishnu and Maheswara. He is Parabrahma Himself. Therefore I pay obeisance to Sri Guru deva.

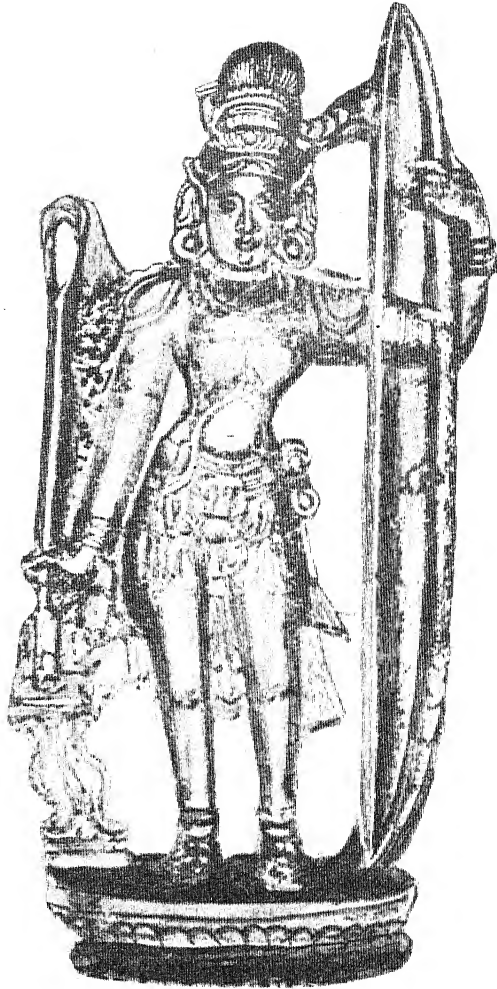
Chapter 26

BHAKTA KANNAPPA

Part I

Sage Bharadwaja wanted to know the story of Bhakta Kannappa. Sage Romasa began the narration as follows:

Once there was a strong yaksha called Manimanta. He was a very haughty person. He saw a beautiful deer with golden fleece having spots like diamonds. Manimanta caught hold of it and strangled it. Nandi saw this ghastly act and grew wild. He said, "You cruel man! You have killed the pet deer of Kubera mercilessly. As a result of this sinful deed you will be born as a hunter and wander in the



Bhaktha Kannappa

forest eating raw meat". The Yaksha became sad and shivered with fear. He folded his hands and prayed to Nandi to indicate a way out. Moved by his repentance, Nandi advised him to go to bhuloka and be born as a hunter named Theerna near Srikalahasti and marry a huntress called Kanisha. You will be gifted with a son who will be a great devotee of Lord Siva. Your son will be very famous. You will discard the hunter's body immediately after your son is born. Then you will come back to this place". Soon he was born as a hunter in a village near Srikalahasti. In due course he married Kanisha. As soon as the son was born, Theerna passed away and joined Kuberaloka. His wife Kanisha named her son as Kanna because he had large eyes. The child grew up day by day. He was freely roaming about in the forest near the holy Kailasa mountain. He always held a big bow and a number of arrows and was fearful to look at. He sported the feathers of birds on his head and was proud of his large eyes. He smeared the holy ashes all over his body and wore holy beads. He was ardently devoted to Siva, but his ways of worship were strange or even crude. He used to fetch the river water in his mouth for bathing the Sivalinga. He would bite pieces of meat before offering them to God. He would first wear garlands of flowers and bilva leaves and then decorate the Linga. This crude way of worship was repulsive to the sages who came to pray. But they were afraid of the hunter and would not dare to question him.

Kannappa was so devoted that he would not even drink water before praying Sivalinga. One day in hot summer he became very thirsty after a long walk in the forest. A pot full of water was available near by. But he would not yield to temptation. He thought, "How can I drink the cool water of this pot without taking bath in the river and praying to the graceful Vayulinga by repeating the Panchakshari mantra. If I quench my thirst before performing Siva puja I am sure to go to hell. Many a person

suffer in the stinking dungeon there, for satiating their hunger without worshipping the Lord. Perhaps I may die of thirst, but who on earth can escape death. One should not care so much for this dirty body which is doomed to perish. How many torn clothes have I not discarded. Just like that a man discards this mortal coil and enter a new body. No I will not touch the water at the moment. I have taken births several times because I failed to worship Sankara with all my heart." To end the misery of samsara, Sankara had to be praised. So concluding he prayed,

"May Neelakanta who pervades the entire universe save me. May the one fond of Samaveda, one who is beyond maya and yet deludes people with maya protect me. May the lord from whose left Vishnu and from right Brahma emanated and who has neither beginning nor end be of solace to me . May He whose very thought drives away sins and confers salvation bring comfort to my tormented soul". Thus meditating on Neelakanta he shed tears of joy. Light showers occurred and the steadfast hunter closed his lips tightly lest drops of rain water should enter his mouth. Providentially pangs of thirst ceased to trouble him.

He suddenly got up and took bath in the river close to Vayulinga. He collected some water in his mouth, plucked some bilva leaves and took some tasted pieces of meat and offered them to the Linga in his own crude way. Completely surrendering himself to the Lord he was happily moving about in the forest. Not a day passed without Siva puja and no moment was spent without His thought. Days, weeks and months rolled on.

Several Sages arrived at Sri Kalahasti one evening for pradosha puja when Lord Siva desired to show the intensity of the hunter's devotion to the Sages. A tremor occurred and the roof slabs began to fall. Seeing this the sages ran away from the temple. But Kannappa stood there deeply concerned about the safety of the linga. He thought that the

Siva Linga should some how be saved from the damage by the falling stones. Most daringly he covered the linga with his own body. He was not afraid of being crushed. He believed that death in the service of God was better than the death by other means. A fearful sound emanated from the temple and soon subsided. Lo! the temple appeared in all its original glory. Neither the hunter nor the Linga was hurt. The sages wondered at the bold act of the hunter. They praised him as a devotee without par. They thought that Kannappa had acquired lot of punya in his previous births. No body on earth would act like this in the face of certain death. They left for their hermitages.

Kannappa was happy for no damage was done to the Linga. He worshipped it and went away.

Chapter 53 of Sthalapurana

Chapter 27

BHAKTA KANNAPPA

Part II

Sage Bhardwaja was thrilled to hear the steadfast nature of Kannappa's Bhakti and requested Romasa to inform him what the hunter was in his previous birth and how he acquired such deep devotion to Sankara. Romasa said:

Once upon a time there lived in the Himalayan forests a hunter who was devoted to Siva. Every day he used to hunt animals, cook meat in ghee and offer to the Great God. After finishing his puja he would consume the offering entirely without giving even a bit to others. One day a small piece of the offered meat fell on the ground and was immediately gulped by his pet cock. The hunter became very angry with the cock and strangled it to death.

Subsequently it was born as a hunter carrying with it the knowledge of its previous birth. As the hunter had consumed food offered to Paramasiva he acquired intelligence as well as bhakti. This hunter was none other than Kannappa who became the chief of his tribe. He lived near Srikalahasti and used to worship the magnificent Vayu Linga daily with several diamonds, flowers and bilva leaves. As he grew old he made his son Kala the chieftain of his tribe and spent all his time in the worship of Vayu Linga. He always carried with him a huge bow and a quiver of arrows. He wore three lines of vibhuti on fifteen parts of his body, rudrakshas around his neck and sandals on his feet. He hunted animals, checked the taste of the meat before offering to the Siva linga. He bathed the linga with water collected in his mouth from the river Swarnamukhi. He decorated the linga with tender bilva leaves and flowers. Then he would offer meat pre- tested for taste chanting the five lettered mantra (Namah Sivaya). Not a single day passed without this routine.

Siva was amused. He decided to exhibit the unparalleled devotion of Kannappa to others and also to eliminate the residue of dehabhimana (attachment to body) lingering in him due to his large eyes. On a day of eclipse of the moon in the month of Phalguna a good number of sages gathered at Srikalahasti to worship Sankara. The Lord chose that day for the demonstration of Kannappa's fervent devotion towards him. As Kannappa approached the linga in a stately manner, the sages withdrew to a distance and watched. All of a sudden tears and blood began to trickle down the left eye of the linga. Noticing this unusual phenomenon, they thought, it conveyed bad tidings. Bad days were ahead of them in view of the hunter's unorthodox ways of worship. They concluded that God was displeased with the clumsy manner of abhiseka and offering of raw meat. But they could not venture to ask the hunter to mend his queer ways.

Kannappa also saw the obnoxious tears on the face of his beloved linga. For a moment he was engrossed in thought. "Am I not sincerely worshipping the lord? Is the god angry with me? Whatever the reason I must immediately find a way of rectifying the defect. For the protection of his devotees the lord should have good eyesight. One eye will do for me". He decided to fix one of his own eyes in the place of the affected eye of the linga. Without a second thought he pulled out an arrow from his quiver removed an eye of his and diligently fixed it in the appropriate place. It fitted the linga very well. With the other eye he could see how beautiful the linga looked with his new acquisition. Kannappa was satisfied as his efforts were successful.

However, his happiness did not last long. He was pained to note tears and blood oozing out of his God's right eye. He lamented "Oh God! Are you again affected. I cannot bear to see you like this. Of what use are eyes to this perishable body. My entire body belongs to you. I can manage without sight for I am familiar with every inch of this place. You will look more beautiful with my second eye; you must have it". He at once decided to don the linga with his second eye. But there was the rub. With total blindness how could he locate the place where it had to be fixed. A good idea struck his mind. Unhesitatingly he placed one of his feet, with its shoe on, and marked the position on the linga. He drew out an arrow and began to remove his eye. All of a sudden his arrow was held by an unexpected arm. He heard, "Oh Kannappa! stop! you have successfully come out of my test. Your devotion is quite unique and laudable. I offer you the top most place among my devotees. Your eye sight is restored. Your fame will last for ever. You occupy a place on the Kailasa mountain closeby so as to always have my darsan. The place where you used to take bath and collect waters for my abhiseka will be known as Bhakti Mukthi Theerta promoting

devotion and granting salvation to its users. Those that read or hear this episode of yours will be blessed in their worldly sojourn and reach Kailasa afterwards. You will worship me for five more years and reach me on the full moon day of Phalguna month".

As Kannappa prostrated, the Lord disappeared in the Vayulinga. The sages were overawed. They were convinced that Bhakti alone was the safe and sure way to obtain salvation. "It is the sincerity of the Bhakti that counts. What we eat, what we drink, what we do, should all be sincerely dedicated to god. A green leaf, a small drona flower, a tasty fruit and a little quantity of water are enough to secure the pleasure of God and a place in Kailasa. Oh Kannappa, you are marvellous". They showered praises on the hunter and worshipped the Vayu Linga and went away wondering at the happenings of the day.

Whether orthodox or hetrodox, a Siva bhakta is to be adored by all.

OM NISHADE BHYASCHA NAMAHA

Chapter 54 of Sthalapurana

Maargaa-varitita-paadukaa Pasupater angasya kurchaayate |
Gandushaambu nishechanam Puraripor divya abhishekaayate |
Kinchid bhakshita maamsa sesha kabalam navyopahaarayate |
Bhaktih kim nakarotyaho vanacharo bhaktaava tamsayate ||

[SIVANANDALAHARI 63]

A worn footwear becomes the indicator to Siva's eye, the pouring of water from the mouth becomes His sacred bath, a piece of meat, partly bitten, becomes excellent dinner, and a hunter becomes the best of devotees! What is there that the love of God cannot accomplish?

Chapter 28

SRI - THE SPIDER

Sage Bharadwaja asked Romasa to inform him about the anecdote of the spider which attained salvation by worshipping Sri Kalahasteswara. Sage Romasa replied that he would narrate the story of the spider which will cleanse people of their sins.

On the banks of the River Tamraparni lived a noble brahmin by name Satyasakha. As a result of the sins committed by him in his previous birth he got a wicked son. That boy discarded the brahminical ways as well as his parents and relatives. He associated himself with the weaver community and went from place to place. At last he reached Konkan and was adopted by a rich weaver called Patala who named the boy as Karamba. Karamba married the daughter of another weaver and was engaged in weaving and selling clothes. In due course Patala died. Karamba duly performed the funeral ceremonies and gifted away land, cow, bride (Kanya), milk, ghee, jaggery, curds, honey, sesame (til), green gram (moong), wheat etc. Further he gave away foot wear, umbrella, gold, silver, bronze, copper and also precious gems. He dug several wells and tanks on road sides. As a result of his good deeds he acquired a great fame. In course of time he came into contact with atheists and spent his money on people who had no belief in vedic religion. He never kept his promises to brahmins. He thought that his happiness was due to discarding the brahminical ways and associating himself with atheists. He was proud of the weavers whose practices he had adopted. In course of time he became old and when he was in his death bed a brahmin approached him with a request to gift him a cloth for his Sivalinga. Karamba was pleased to give him a nice cloth. Soon he died thinking about the fine art of weaving. As a result of his drinking

habit and his thoughts at the time of death, he was born as a spider in Dakshina Kailasa. As he had gifted fine clothes for Sivalinga he was devoted to Siva in his next birth as a spider called SRI.

He took bath regularly in the river Swarnamukhi and visited the sanctum sanctorum of the Vayu Linga and prostrated several times. From the yarn emulating from the body he decorated the vicinity with several chariots, mandaps, towers, thrones etc. He made 32 offerings and devoutly worshipped Lord Siva. This was continued for several years. Lord Parameswara wanted to test the depth of his devotion.

On the fourteenth day of the bright half of the moon in the month of Chaitra, a Monday, the Lord caused all the creations of the spider to be reduced to ashes. The spider was disappointed and ended his life by entering the flames of the lamp near-by. By the grace of God the spider regained his original form. He beheld before him Lord Sankara seated on His favorite bull and sang His praise:

"I worship Mahadeva residing in the Kailasa on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi. My salutations to the blue-throated Mahadeva who is Eternal, Power, Knowledge and Bliss.

I pray to Mahadeva whose half is Gnanambika and who freely grants boons to His devotees. I worship Mahadeva who annihilated the adamant Manmadha and who carefully watches the activities of all beings. I worship Mahadeva whose face is adorned by the impression of the great devotee Kannappa's foot and who had relished the meat offered by him. I worship Mahadeva who has ten hands and Vishnu as arrow and who is the cause of all the worlds. I worship Mahadeva the saviour of souls from the cycle of births and deaths. I worship Mahadeva whom sages perceive in their own hearts as pure and one without a second.

I worship Mahadeva who is very close to his devotees, though they are far off and who is beheld through vedas.

I worship Mahadeva whom the vedas proclaim as Karmaphalapradata (the bestower of fruits according to one's deeds) and who is the wielder of Maya and the greatest of Gods.

I worship Mahadeva who is not perceived by the ignorant, as snake in a rope, and who is cognised only by Sages.

I worship Mahadeva who creates jeevas from Parabrahman just as sparks emanate from fire.

I worship Mahadeva whose commands are implicitly obeyed by Bramha, Vishnu, Indra, and other gods.

I worship Mahadeva in whom all are seen and who is seen in all and who has saved Mayura.

I worship Mahadeva who is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest and is one without a second.

I worship Mahadeva who causes the five acts of creation, protection, annihilation, Anugraha (blessing) and Tirobhava (withdrawal).

I worship Mahadeva the father, protector and preceptor of one and all. I worship Mahadeva who has created Brahma and has given him the Vedas;

I worship Mahadeva who for the protection of his devotee Neela had manifested as Manikarnikeswara with a crescent moon adorning his crown; I worship Mahadeva who wards off all kinds of fears and the ignorance without a beginning and who is Sarvagna (knower of all); I worship Mahadeva who with the vedas as the horses for his chariot had reduced the three cities (Tripuras) in a trice.

I worship Mahadeva who is the root of Salvation and who has redeemed Chandra of his sins.

I worship Mahadeva wearing a crown of diamonds with a Crescent Moon on it and whose face is resplendent with a smile.

I worship Mahadeva who with His kind looks bestows boons on His devotees and who is the light of the mansions of Upanishads.

Thus praising the Lord, the spider, stood reverently before Parameswara, who said, "I am pleased with your sincerity, your way of worship and your immolation as well as the praises you have showered on me. You are really blessed. Pray for any boons and they will be granted".

"Oh God!" said the spider, "Let the people who recite this prayer of mine be relieved of their miseries and acquire eminence as well as salvation. May I find a place in the imposing Vayulinga. Let my name, Sri be associated with yours, besides this kshetra and the mountain".

The Great God granted these boons. As the Gandharvas danced and the celestials beat the drums the spider Sri merged into the Vayu Linga. The Gods and sages concluded that it was not the birth in high caste, nor through various yogas but only steadfast devotion that merited recognition of Sankara even if the devotee be an insignificant worm. They all praised the Lord and dispersed.

Chapter 55 of Sthalapurana

Suvarnamukhari teera divya Kailasa vasine |
Vanditaayamarai sarvair Mahadevayate namah ||
Om; lutaarti mochakaya namaha |

[SIVA RAHASYA KHANDAM]

My salutations to Mahadeva residing in the sacred Kailasa on the banks of Swarnamukhi and worshipped by all Gods. I pray to the Lord who had redeemed the spider named Sri.

Chapter 29

KALA AND HASTI

(The Serpent and The Elephant)

Sage Bharadwaja told Romasa that he was thrilled to hear the way in which the spider attained salvation in Dakshina Kailasa. "I am eager to know the episode relating to the serpent and the elephant that got moksha there." Romasa began:

"Once a brahmin well-versed in vedas lived in the vicinity of Malaya mountain. He was very poor. For the sake of others he would fast and keep awake on Sivarathri days. He performed worship for the sake of some consideration from a few devotees. But he was quite sincere in his efforts. In due course he died bitten by a serpent. As he accepted money for the pujas he performed in his previous birth he was born as a mighty elephant. Even as an elephant he was devoted to Lord Siva and never failed to worship the luminous Vayulinga with tender bilva leaves and blossomed lotuses. Even Gods applauded the depth of devotion of the elephant.

Contemporarily there was another brahmin who lived in a cave of the Himalayas. He was also very learned and was devoted to Sankara. He witnessed a Gandharva who used to spend entire days worshipping Siva with precious stones. He approached the Gandharva and requested him to inform him the effect of worshipping Siva with diamonds. The Gandharva said, "Those who worship Siva with diamonds were sure to reach Kailasa in this birth itself not easily accessible even to Gods like Bramha". Then the brahmin enquired where he could obtain such valuable diamonds. The Gandharva replied, that he procured the diamonds from the various sea-gods. "The easiest way for you to get the precious stones is to be reborn as a serpent and collect them from the Naga-loka where they are

available in plenty". The brahmin thanked the celestial and was soon born as a serpent. Daily the serpent used to fetch various kinds of gems from the serpent world and offer them to the Vayu Linga.

While the serpent offered its puja with diamonds every morning, the elephant selected noon-time for its worship with tender leaves and fragrant flowers. To its dejection, the elephant saw that heavy stones (gems) were placed on the linga throwing away the offerings made by it. On the other hand the serpent was worried to notice the precious stones offered by it strewn all around and leaves and flowers with thorns placed on the linga. It thought that the thorns would pain his Lord. The elephant thought that the stones would be a heavy burden on the idol dear to it. Thus each thought that the other was an enemy of Sankara deserving severe punishment. Each decided to put an end to the other in the service of the Lord.

On one Ekadasi day in the bright half of the month of Magha the serpent hid itself behind the bilva leaves adorning the Linga. The elephant was happy to see its offerings undisturbed. As it tried to remove the withered flowers with its trunk, the serpent suddenly entered its nostrils, reached the head of the elephant and spit poison. Unable to bear the pain and determined to end itself as well as its foe, the elephant dashed its head against the rocks of the mountain behind the Vayulinga. Both of them died simultaneously.

At once both of them manifested themselves as celestials having three eyes, each with crescent moon on their foreheads and glowing radiance. On that Monday, Lord Sankara accompanied by Gnanamba emerged from the Vayu linga and appeared before them.

At the same time Brahma and Vishnu on their vehicles of Swan and Garuda, Ganapati and Senapati on their

mounts of mouse and peacock arrived at the spot to worship Sankara. Sages like Bhringi and Vasista, Lokapalakas like Indra and Gandharvas also came. Seas, rivers, mountains, gardens like Devadaru, holy places like Kasi all assumed divine forms and visited the place to pray to Parameswara. The serpent, Kala and the elephant, Hasti together praised the Lord as follows :-

"Oh Sankara! you are the lord of the entire universe. You are the beloved of Haimavathi. You protect your devotees. Your radiance permeates everywhere.. With the predominance of Rajoguna you created the movable and immovable objects in the universe. You are independent. We worship you in the form of Brahma, the creator. With the predominance of Satvaguna you protect the worlds. You are omnipotent. We worship you in the form of Vishnu, the protector. With the predominance of Tamoguna you destroy the worlds. You are omniscient. We worship you as Rudra, the destroyer. Oh God! you are the cause, the material, the doer, the action as well as the distributor of the fruits of our actions. The Sankhyas recognise you as the twenty sixth tatwa namely Eswara. Yogis discern you by control of breath. Mantrikas perceive you by repeating your sacred name preceded and followed by anganyasa and karanyasa. Sages cognise you through pure consciousness. What is the need for pilgrimage to various places and for performing laborious sacrifices when you can be reached by meditating upon your glorious name? All the living species are but animals (pasus) while you are their master (Pasupati). You are called Rudra for the letter Ru denotes Pranava or Nada or Veda. You are also called Rudra as you destroy the sins of your devotees. Because you kindle happiness in your devotees you are called Siva. As you are the prime cause you are known as Bhava. As you lavish all wealth on your worshippers you are Easa. As you dwell in the Vedas, in Pranava, in clouds and in mountains you are Girisa. You are greater than all Gods; hence you are

known as Mahadeva. You cause happiness - so you are called Sambhu. You pervade everywhere, hence people call you as Vishnu. Even Vedas are unable to fully comprehend your attributes. Then how can ignorant creatures like us? We take refuge in you. Kindly save us".

After being praised in this manner Paramasiva was much pleased and offered to grant boons they might wish for. The serpent and elephant asked for the following boons.

1. They should merge with the Vayulinga.
2. The kshetra, the mountain and the Linga should bear their names.
3. Those who discard their mortal coils in that holy place should get salvation.
4. Devotees taking bath in the Kalateertha and Hastiteertha and worship the Vayulinga with precious stones or lotus flowers or bilva leaves should also attain salvation.
5. The various Gods and the sacred rivers that have arrived here should ever be present in the kshetra.

Sankara smiled and benignly granted the boons, and said, "In this place a spider worshipped me earlier and had asked for similar boons. Today onwards your three names will be associated with the Linga, the kshetra and the mountain; here after they will be known as Srikalahasteeswara, Srikalahastikshetra and Srikalahastigiri. The good deeds done in this place will be rewarded manifold. Those that worship me reciting the stotra rendered by you will be rewarded herein and hereafter".

To the wonder of all the Gods and sages present there, the serpent and the elephant merged with the Vayulinga.

Chapter 56 and 57 of Sthalapurana

Note: The unique Linga bears the forms of the spider, the serpent and the tusks of the elephant prominently.

Nagendra haaraya trilochanaaya
 Bhasmaangaraagaya Maheswaraaya
 Nityaya Sudhaya digambaraya
 Tasmai Nakaaraya Namasivaaya ।

I bow down to Maheswara Siva, the eternal pure and naked; to the Three-eyed one, with His entire body smeared with sacred ashes and with a huge serpent as a graland; to the One connoted by the letter NA.

Chapter 30

SUDARSANA CHAKRA

Bharadwaja asked Sage Romasa to narrate how Sudarsana Chakra came to acquire three sins and how it was purified from them. Romasa obliged him by telling the story.

Long ago Mahadeva created Sudarsana Chakra from the tip of his toe for the purpose of destroying a demon named Jalandhara. He gave it to Vishnu and he himself wielded the trident representing three gunas - Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Together they both fought with Jalandhara and killed him along with all his kith and kin. Afterwards Vishnu killed several other demons with the help of Sudarsana. In Vaikunta, Vishnu boasted before Mahalakshmi and her attendants that he vanquished several demons by the sheer strength of his mighty shoulders with no assistance what so ever from others. Sudarsana which was standing close by said addressing Vishnu, "It is not proper for you to prattle like this just to please the lady folk. In fact it was I that annihilated the Rakshasas. But for me you could have achieved nothing". So saying it went away

and began to wander as it liked. Thus by thought, word and deed it defied Vishnu and came to be associated with the three sins. Vishnu reported the misbehaviour of the Chakra to Sankara. Siva pacified Vishnu by withdrawing the power of the Chakra. Deprived of its power Sudarsana had no strength even to stand. With a shameful face it approached Sankara and pleaded guilty of haughty headedness. As father, the Great God should pardon him and restore him his strength. He promised to be obedient to Vishnu thereafter. Sankara said, "You have committed the triple sins of thought, word and deed. You have to perform penance in the holy Dakshina Kailasa to be purified of your sins. Go there install a Linga, observe austerities and meditate. Then you will get redemption".

Soon Sudarsana reached the northflowing river, Swarnamukhi, took bath in it, worshipped Vayu Linga with bilva leaves. He then installed a Linga to the east of Kanakachala close by and started intense tapas. In due course the Lord manifested Himself from the Linga installed by the Chakra. It was very happy to see the Lord and praised him in several meaningful verses. The Lord restored its original lustre and handed it over to Vishnu. Both the Chakra and Vishnu gratefully thanked Mahadeva and paid obeisance to him. Thereafter Chakra never parted Vishnu and helped him in protecting the good and punishing the wicked.

Chapter 58 Sthalapurana

Jaya gnana daya sindho jaya devottamottama |

Jaya SriKalahasteesa jaya Gnanambikapate ||

Victory to the Ocean of knowledge and kindness;
Victory to the Supreme God of Gods; Victory to
SriKalahasteesa; Victory to the beloved of Gnanambika.

[SIVARAHASYA KHANDAM]

CHAPTER 31

ARDHANAREESWARA AND THE
STORY OF VIJAYA AND SUBHAGA

Subsequently Sage Romasa began to describe the glory of the Ardhanareeswara linga and narrated the anecdote of a pious couple who worshipped it.

About two miles to the north of Vayulinga of Sri Kalahasti, stands the shrine of Sri Ardhanareeswara in the village of Visalapuram, which is known in purana as Papa Vicheda Kshetra. This shrine is located on the bank of the sacred north flowing river Swarnamukhi and has a Swayambhu Linga which is unique. The Siva portion is white in hue and is facing west whereas the Sakthi portion yellow in colour is facing north-east. In fact our scriptures declare that the west face of Siva is as white as cow's milk GO KSHEERA PHENA PRABHAM and the northern face is yellowish red - GOURAM KUMKUMA PANKILAM.

This Linga was worshipped in Kritayuga by Gods themselves and was known as Satya Linga. Later in Dwapara yuga, a celibate couple, Vijaya and Subhaga from Avanthi worshipped this deity and attained salvation. Since then, this Linga has come to be known as Subhagamba sameta Sri Vijayeswara Swami.

The story of Vijaya and Subhaga is wonderful, thrilling and has no parallel.

In Avanti there lived a young and beautiful couple by name Vijaya and Subhaga. Even from his childhood Vijaya was drawn to Shiva's worship. He conquered his senses and was determined to realise himself. One day he met the great sage Markandeya and in all humility requested him to enlighten him about Sivaadvaita and the path of self realisation. The learned sage taught him the course to be adopted and advised him to proceed to Srimad

Dakshina Kailasa and get enlightenment by the grace of Sri Kalahasteeswara and Gnanaprasunamba.

Accordingly, Vijaya came to Sri Kalahasti with his wife Subhaga and lived in a small house. With the holy ashes on his forehead and the sacred rudraksha beads around his neck he used to go to the temple and worship Sri Kalahasteeswara as advised by Sage Markandeya. He would go home only to take a little food for sustenance and immediately return to the temple to resume his worship.

One evening when Vijaya came home, his wife gave him special delicious food, sweets and fruits. As he lay down to relax his wife adorned herself with the best of her jewels, discarded her clothes, sat close to his thighs and requested him to enjoy the night with her. For Vijaya every object, living or inert would appear only as pervaded by Siva and her beautiful breasts only appeared to him as a couple of golden Siva Lingas! In a worshipful mood he offered flowers, scents and fruits kept by his wife to those twin Lingas and went away to the temple. On his way he wondered how a couple of such Lingas could come to his house. As he pondered over, he realised that it was all due to his young wife and doubted whether his continued stay at home would hamper his spiritual progress. In his dream Sri Kalahasteeswara directed him to go north, where he would find an Ardhanaareswara double Linga so far worshipped by Gods and sages. So Vijaya abandoned his home, his wife and riches and reached Papa Vicheda Kshetra and was happy to find the deity of his dream.

At home the disappointed Subhaga thought that it was quite unnatural for human beings to run away from wealth or women more so from a beautiful young and obedient woman like her. Even her naked beauty did not stir carnal desires in him. Gods and sages would have yielded under these circumstances but not her husband. He had reached a high stage of spiritual evolution and

renunciation, as a result of severe practice and God's grace. The real goal being salvation through self realisation, the sure and safe way for her was to follow the foot-prints of her husband, a great devotee of Lord Siva. Thus determined, Subhaga at once discarded all mundane thoughts and took to severe austerities and intense worship of Siva. Soon she was initiated by a Siva Yogi and learnt the ways and means of salvation. She was keen on performing special offerings to one hundred lingas made of mud everyday. Soon Lord Siva was pleased and wanted to subject her faith to severe test.

In the disguise of a young, beautiful brahmin he appeared before her and wanted to lure her. "What is the use of sacrificing beauty in austerities? Come with me and enjoy youth and wealth" he told her. Neither his sensuous form nor his endearing words had any effect on her. When he tried to force her she closed her eyes and prayed to Lord Siva to save her. To her surprise she saw Lord Sri Kalahasteswara and Gnanambika before her, who told her that they only wanted to test her. The Lord praised her, "Oh virtuous lady! Your disciplined life, steadfastness and chasity are highly commendable. Even celestials are not equal to you. Ask for any boons". She wanted to be spared further cycles of births and deaths and to rest in Him. He gave her Sayuja mukti immediately.

Vijaya heard of her and intensified his own worship. Without food and sleep he performed Siva puja all the time. But the Lord wanted to test him also. So He asked his trusted Ganadyaksha Chandrahasa to assume the form of Narayana and distract the attention of Vijaya and allure him with material benefits. Chandrahasa appeared before Vijaya in the form of Narayana and was offered reverence. This Narayana asked him whether any useful purpose was served by the worship of Siva, the dweller of cremation ground, who smeared ashes of dead bodies and begged food in a skull for a living. Indeed only he Narayana was

capable of sustaining the whole world with the help of his consort Lakshmi. Even after death he could provide a place in Swarga where his devotees enjoy the company of the celestial damsels. Vijaya at once asked him to stop talking further. Had he forgotten his dispute with Brahma for supremacy when Siva appeared between them as a huge pillar of fire, whose height and depth could not be measured by either of them. Was it not due to Siva's grace that Narayana enjoyed his position and power and said that there was no use of talking to an ungrateful person. Then Chandrahasta revealed his true self to Vijaya and assured him that Lord Siva would soon appear before him.

On the full moon day of the month of Sravan, Sri Kalahasteswara and Gnanaprasuna emerged from Ardhanaareswara Satya Ligna and gave darsan to him. Vijaya's joy knew no bounds and he sang in praise of the Lord. The Lord assured him that he along with his consort be ever present in that Linga, which would thereafter be known as Subhagamba sameta Sri Vijayeswara and be fulfilling the desires of the worshippers. Yagna, Dana, Tapas and other offerings at this place would be as effective as those done at Sri Kalahasti.

Note :

[On days of religious importance such as Mondays, Fridays, New Moon day, Eclipse and Mahasivarathri several worshippers visit this place and get their desires fulfilled.]

Chapters 59 to 68 of Sthalapurana

1. Uma Sankarayor bhedo naastveva paramardhatah |
Dwidhasau rupamasthaya sthita eko na samsayah |
2. Sama pradhanow sama sattvow samotayoh |
Ssama saktirajaraa viswayonih |
3. Vande vaanchita laabhaya karma kim tanna kathyate |
Kim dampatimite bruyaa mutaaho dampatee iti ||

1. Really there is no difference between Uma and Sankara; though two in form they remain united as one. There is no doubt whatsoever.
2. Equally important, equally powerful, between them interwoven is all the force, the ageless source of all the universe.

[TRIPUROPANISHAD]

3. To get what I desire, I bow down - why is the object not mentioned? Shall I say the 'couple' in singular or in dual according to grammar?

[NILAKANTHA DIKSHITA]

Chapter 32

JAPALA THE STAUNCH

Long long ago there lived a pious brahmin by name Nandi in a village at the foot of the Nandi hills not far away from Sri Kalahasti. He practised Veerasaivism and would not worship any God other than Siva. His faith in Siva was so intense that he would not speak with persons devoted to other Gods. His wife Japala assisted him in various ways. After ardently worshipping Lord Siva for several years he became very old and was bed ridden. Realising that his end was near he called his kith and kin near his bed and said to his wife, "Oh dear! you have served me faithfully all these years. Your devotion to Lord Siva has no parallel. Listen to my last wish. Do not immolate yourself on my funeral pyre. You will do well to serve the devotees of Lord Siva. Give them clothes and feed them well. Smear the holy ashes

and wear the holy rudraksha beads always. The Lord will surely bless you. Soon I am going to His abode. Farewell".

After Nandi passed away his wife performed the last rites due to him. She adopted the austerities of a Veerasaivite more rigorously. Every morning she used to go to the distant Kurma Teertha for her bath and fetch its waters for worship. She smeared the holy ashes on the different parts of her body and wore the holy beads. She hated to look at the face of a person who had no marks of ashes on his forehead and beads around his neck. On the other hand she would worship people with these saivite symbols, give them not only food but also clothes. On one krittika day during the month of karteeka she fasted the whole day kept awake the whole night and worshipped Lord Subrahmanya. And the Lord was pleased.

On finishing her ablutions the next morning at the Kurma lake, she saw at a little distance away a handsome hunter with a bow and arrows. He had the holy ashes and holy beads. He could not be a mere hunter for there was divine radiance about him. Her duty was to worship any person with the auspicious marks dear to Siva. Low caste should not hinder her. So she approached him reverantly and requested him to visit her house, washed his hands and feet and fed him. The God revealed himself to her. She was pleasantly surprised to see Lord Subrahmanya himself standing before her and praised his grace. The Lord told her, "I am pleased with your sincere prayers. What can I do for you". "Dear God!" she said, "What else do I want except that my devotion to Lord Siva should so please him. In this old age I find it difficult to go to Kurma lake. Kindly create a small pond close to my house". Skanda granted her wish by creating a pond with one stroke of his Saktivel, naming it as Japala teertha. She used to bathe in its waters and continued her worship with redoubled enthusiasm. At last Lord Siva was pleased, but wanted to test her. One day

he appeared near her house disguised as an ardent devotee of Siva. She was happy to get a new guest for the day. After washing his feet she offered him food. As she was serving payasam, pretending it to be too hot for him to bear, he let it go exclaiming "Narayana, Narayana", the mention of whose name she would not tolerate. The annoyed lady at once hit his head with the laddle in her hand. The blow was so hard that his head split into five pieces bleeding profusely. In the place of her guest appeared a Siva Linga, with its top broken into five. Japala stood astonished. Before she could comprehend, she saw Lord Siva right in front of her, with Parvati as his left half. He was seated on the bull and accompanied by celestials and Siva ganas. He declared that he was immensely pleased. "This Linga will hereafter be known as Uttarakeswara. I will be ever present in it granting the wishes of its worshippers. Those that worship it on the fourteenth day after the full moon in the month of Chaitra will be very dear to me. Now is the time for you to come to my abode Kailasa and stay with your husband Nandi for ever".

The Lord vanished. Japala's mortal coil fell and those present could behold her celestial body rise higher and higher.

Chapter 69 of Sthalapuramam.

Note : This place is now known as Vyasa Ashram, Yerpedu about 15 km to the west of Sri Kalahasti.

Suddha Saiva-miti proktam Veera Saiva-matah srunu
Sarveshaamapi Saivaanaam Veera Saivam mahattarah ||

Veerasaivam is considered to be pure Saivam. So it is better than other disciplines.

Chapter 33

MRITYUNJAYA

At the request of Bharadwaja, Romasa began to tell the story of Mrityunjaya :

Once upon a time there existed a city called Dharmapraja on the banks of the river Kowsiki at the foot of the Himalayas. This city was ruled by a king named Mrityunjaya, son of Yamadhwaja. The king was a devotee of Siva. He ruled his kingdom well. One day a great sage Raikwa was waiting at the entrance of the palace. He was very hungry and expected the king to receive him and offer food.

Unfortunately the king did not notice the presence of the sage, took his meals and fell asleep. After waiting for a long time, the sage asked the gate keeper to inform the king about his waiting for food. Accordingly the servant went inside and found the king fast asleep. He was placed in a dilemma between a hungry sage outside and a sleeping king inside the palace. As soon as he noticed the king turning in the bed he ventured to inform him about the holy man. The king was upset for being disturbed, scolded the servant for his indiscretion and asked him to turn away the sage. The poor servant deplored that it was a hard job to serve others; and to serve a king was to do acrobat on the sharp edge of a long sword. He narrated what had transpired and requested the sage to seek food elsewhere. The holy man became very angry and remarked that a busy king should not neglect his duties and should not sleep during day time. He cursed that the king would soon lose his kingdom as well as his kith and kin and wander in forest for twelve years in hunger and despair.

Soon the king woke up to hear the curse and was frightened. He sent for his purohit and consulted him. The purohit was very sorry for the king and told him that there

was no escape. Every man has to reap the consequences of his good and bad deeds. *Gahana karmano gatihi*. Inscrutable are the ways of Karma. As the two were discussing thus a messenger came to inform the king that turks had invaded his territory and were about to seige the palace. The king's despair knew no bounds. Soon he discarded his royal robes, disguised as a poor man and fled to forests. His queen Bhanumati and her son Sudhama were led away by the purohit to a safer place. The frightened king wandered desperately from forest to forest. He could get neither food nor water to satiate his hunger and quench thirst. He had to live on raw meat and dirty water. Thus eleven years and eight months passed away.

At last the emaciated Mrityunjaya happened to come near the hermitage of Sage Markandeya on the banks of the river Cauvery. The very atmosphere of the ashram gave him a lot of relief. As he was wondering as to the cause of this unusual exprience, he saw before him the great sage. He prostrated before him and stood silent, too dazed to utter a word. The sage recapitulated the whole story of the king in his mind. Briefly narrating the events, the sage told the king that his long suffering was to end soon. He would regain his kingdom and be united with his family. He advised the king to go to the holiest of the holy places, Srimath Dakishna Kailasa and worship Srikalahasteeswara by reciting His one hundred names. This garland of names Satanamabja malika (See Appendix III) was originally given by Yogi Sananda to Yama, who in turn had offered it to Markandeya. The offering of this garland of names would not only redeem the sins but also bestow great merit and endure happiness. The king received the blessings of Sage Markandeya and the sacred garland of hundred names and soon set out for Srikalahasti.

He took bath in the clear waters of the north flowing river Swarnamukhi. He was delighted to see the imposing Linga of Srikalahasteeswara worshipped from time

immemorial by spider, serpent, elephant, Kannappa, besides a number of celestials, sages, kings and others. He worshipped it with bilva leaves prostrated before it. Further he installed a beautiful west facing Linga in his name close to the main deity and worshipped it daily reciting the hundred sacred names. For enlightenment he lighted several oil lamps near it. For obtaining divine knowledge he used to bathe it with cows milk and decorated it with bilva leaves and several flowers. Observing several austerities he worshipped the Linga for several days.

After four months Srikalahasteeswara appeared before him and blessed him with a holy sword and power to conquer his enemies. He further granted the request of the king that those who worship this Linga on Karthika Purnima (Full moon day of the month of Karthika) should get their desires fulfilled and finally reach God's abode. The king soon reached his place and vanquished his enemies with ease. His wife and son joined him. He ruled over his kingdom happily for several years and finally cast off his mortal coil to go to Lord shiva's abode.

Chapter 70-71 of original.

Note: During drought periods devotees erect a temporary wall at the door way of the Shrine and reverently pour river water over the Mritunjaya Linga. As soon as it is completely immersed, dark clouds gather and sufficient rain fall occurs.

Yayena loka rakshaardham yaa dathe bhavate puraa

Subhaa Srikalahasteesa preetida naama maalikaa ||

Imam Srikalahasteesa sata-naamaabja maalikam

Pathatwam satatam bhoopa sarvaapadvini vrittaye ||

This garland of hundred (names) lotuses dear to the Lord of Srikalahasti is an ancient one designed for the welfare of mankind. By constantly repeating these hundred names, all difficulties can be overcome by His grace.

Chapter 34

DEVARISHI NARADA

Sage Bharadwaj requested Romasa to inform the way in which Devarishi Narada performed penance at Srikalahasthi and how Skanda explained him about Sivadharmas.

Romasa began Devarishi Narada praising Lord Sankara went to Kailasa. The scene was awesome. Huge drums were beating, conches were blaring and damaru was rattling. To the accompaniment of this deafening music Lord Siva was hectically dancing His favourite Tandava. Under his heavy foot the earth trembled. His appearance was also terrifying. He wore tiger skin clothes; His ornaments were serpents and a garland of skulls, His locks were dishevelled. He was trampling a demon called Apasmaraka with His right foot, while His left foot was raised. His weapons were the trident and fire. The hall was filled with numerous dwarfs and abominable ganas. The entire dance scene was bewitching. As soon as the performance was over the sage prostrated before the Lord and, taking leave of Him, left the place wondering at the peculiarities of Kailasavasa. The sage began to ruminate as to why Mahadeva should select a cremation ground as His dwelling place in preference to lovely Meru mountain. Why should He wear the skin of tigers, lions and elephants instead of laced silk clothes? While He could get diamond set jewels why should He prefer a garland of skulls? Why are the damaru and trisula His weapons? Why is the old bull for His vehicle? Why is this odd third eye and Why are these armlets of serpents? There should be a special significance for all these attributes of Pasupathi. And Narada wanted to clarify his doubts.

Playing on his Mahati Veena, the sage went to Brahma loka. Saluting Pitamaha he narrated all his doubts and said,

"Dear father! Vast and mysterious are the attributes of Lord Maheswara kindly elucidate Siva Tatwa". Brahma replied, "Son! your doubts are quite pertinent. Strange indeed are the ways of Lord Siva. He is at once the kind Sankara and the terrible Rudra. Only the Great God and his son Subrahmanya can clear your doubts. None else can understand and explain the divine attributes of Parameswara. Go to Dakshina Kailasa on the banks of the Swarnamukhi, observing austerities invoke Lord Subrahmanya in the hillock named Vidya Saila and worship Sri Kalahasteswara manifest there as a tall linga. Your doubts will be cleared by the grace of Parameswara".

Then the sage went to the spot indicated by Brahma. He worshipped the Vayu Linga, went to Vidya Saila, prayed to Lord Subrahmanya, installed a Siva linga called "Kailasanatha" established a teertha called Tatwa prakasa teertha and started penance. After some days Srikalahasteswara appeared before him and instructed his son Subrahmanya to explain Siva Tatwa to the sage in full detail and disappeared.

Guru Guha explained as follows:

VRISABHA VAHANA : At the time of Pralaya, as Siva was dancing the cosmic dance every thing in the universe was getting destroyed. The only shining object was Paramatma. At that time Dharma (rightuousness) took the form of a bull and sought the protection of the Lord. Lord thought that Dharma should never be destroyed as every thing else had its support only in Dharma. In view of the fact that he had the whole universe in himself he decided to have the rightuousness in the form of the bull as His Vahana. Thus Nandi carries Siva and is sustained by Him.

HOLY ASHES AND CREMATION GROUND : As indicated above every thing was reduced to ashes at the

time of Pralaya. Only Siva remained in the Maha Smasana or the great cremation ground. Skulls, bones and ashes were scattered every where. In order to prove His timelessness and immortality he wore a garland of skulls and bones. As ashes were capable of shedding fear and protecting people from ailments and ever shining they were adopted by him. He smeared the ashes on several parts of his body. The only fitting place for the Lord, whose sport is destruction of all living beings, is the cremation ground itself.

OTHER ATTRIBUTES: After the churning of the Ocean of milk for Nectar, the Tortoise that supported Mandhara mountain went amuck and was creating havoc. Lord Siva destroyed it and wore its shell in his waist. Lord Narayana took the form of a wild boar to kill Hiranyaksha. Succeeding in its purpose the Boar began to attack everything it came across. Paramasiva destroyed the animal and triumphantly wore its horn in His neck. Again the man-lion, Narasimha became uncontrollable after vanquishing Hiranya Kasipu. Mahadeva took the form of a ferocious Sarabha, destroyed the Lion and wore its skin as garment.

Once the Lord manifested Himself as a handsome young beggar and was wandering quite naked in PitruVana where a number of sages were engaged in the performance of homa. Their ladies were infatuated. They were not able to turn their gaze away from the naked beauty and passionately followed Him. Noticing this, the sages became furious. Their curses had no effect. They propelled Apasmara on Siva to deprive Him of His mental faculties. The Lord dwarfed the demon and trampled over it with His right foot. Chanting mantras they let lose a deer, a tiger, a trident, snakes, fire and several goblins, on the beggar, who subjugated them all. They became powerful weapons, garments, loyal servants of the intruder. The various

mantras chanted by the sages, while performing the Abhicharika Homa, were silenced and absorbed by the incessant rattling of the damaru. The sages and their women folk were perplexed and stood dumb. Then the Lord revealed His true form and dispelled their illusion. They praised Mahadeva and recieved his blessings.

Once upon a time, a demon took the form of an elephant and caused havoc in and around the sacred city of Varanasi. The dwellers invoked Viswanatha for help, who killed the elephant, tore its skin and wore it over His back. That was how the hide of an elephant came to be associated with Paramasiva.

On getting clarification for all his doubts from Guru Guha, the divine sage Narada prostrated before him and sang in praise of SriKalahasteeswara who manifested Himself from the Kailasanatha Linga installed by Narada. Thus it became an object of worship and since then the holy Kshetra is known as Naradapura.

Chapters 72 and 73 of Sthalapurana

Smashaneshyvaa-kreeda Smarahara pishaachaah sahacharaa |
schitaa-bhasmaa lepah sragapi nrikarotee parikarah |
Amangalyam seelam tawa bhavatu maamaiva makhilam |
tadhapi smartrunaam Verada paramam mangala-mapi ||

[SIVA-MAHIMNAH STOTRAM]

O Destroyer of the God of love, O Giver of boons, thy play is in cremation grounds, Thy companions are ghosts, Thou besmearest Thy body with the ashes of burnt bodies, and human skulls are Thy garland - all Thy conduct indeed is thus full of evil. But Thou Conducest to the Great good of those who remember Thee.

Chapter 35

SATYAVRATA BHASKARA KSHETRA

Addressing Romasa, Bharadwaja wanted to know the greatness of the holy places, rivers and mountains as enunciated by Sri Subrahmanya to the Sage Narada. Romasa replied that, Sri Subrahmanya began the narration with the rivers.

Ganga, Yamuna, Chandrabhaga, Saraswati, Sindhu, Godavari, Bhadra, Narmada and Swarnamukhi are holy among the rivers. Of them Swarnamukhi is the holiest one. While a person is required to bathe several times in the rivers mentioned first to wash away his sins, a single dip in the river Swarnamukhi is enough to achieve this. Hence the waters of this river possess great efficacy.

Among the mountains Sri, Vridham, Grudhramu, Goshona, Varna, Bilva, Mani, Himagiri, Sadaksha and Dakshina Kailasa are notable. Of these Dakshina Kailasa is the most beneficial one as it was a holy peak of heavenly Kailasa implanted on earth by Lord Brahma at the time of creation for his penance. A stay on the Mountain even for a moment is more rewarding than laborious japas, penance, sacrifices, etc. This mountain is the cosmic manifestation of Lord Siva and has no parallel at all.

" There are several famous forests in the world. The famous among them are Kanchivana, Vataaranya, Devadaruvana, Swetaaranya, Shrutivana, Pippalaaranya, Taalaaranya, Tillivana, Vamsaaryana, Akhandabilva kanana worshipped by several Gods, Naimishaaryana and Tejinivana. Among these Akandabilva forest is the most sacred one as it is the favourite of Siva and Paravati. The people residing there acquire peace of mind and tranquility.

The world is dotted with numerous kshetras, the important ones being Kashi, Prabhasa, Prayaga, Naimisha, Gaya, Kapila, Satya, Grudra, Kurma, Mamaka, Agastya,

Chandra, Kuru, Kusavarta, Gomukta, Kula, Dharma, Mahendra, Soma, Sri Dakshina Kailasa, Siddha, Prajapati, Durga and Bhairava. Of these 24 Kshetras Dakshina Kailasa ranks first. The very thought of this holy place will rid the people of their miseries. Residing in this place for a single day is as beneficial as the stay for 100 years in other holy places. As the Kshetra is dear to Sankara, it is considered as a gem among the holy places.

There are countless naturally formed Lingas all over the world the most renowned lingas are

1. Putaarjuna 2. Madhyaarjuna 3. Mayuranatha
4. Vrihivaneswara 5. Uddalakeswara 6. Rameswara
7. Panchanadesa 8. Pasupati 9. Vedaaranyesa
10. Svetavanesa 11. Chayavanesa 12. Chutapuresa
13. Virddhachalesa 14. Pranavesa 15. Gomuktanatha
16. Taalavanesa 17. Vitankanatha 18. Pushpavanesa
19. Dakshinavartanatha 20. Nagesvara 21. Kumbhakonesa
22. Vedapuresa 23. Gangadharesa 24. Bilvavanesa
25. Margasahaya 26. Vatavanesa 27. Ksheerapriyesa
28. Kotisurarchita 29. Sudhaghatesa 30. Kaleswara
31. Hatakeswara 32. Vidyadharesvara 33. Srisailanatha
34. Dharmapuresvara 35. Sri Viswanatha 36. Vedachaleswara
37. Kedaranatha 38. Leelanata 39. Mahabaleswara
40. Bhaktapriyeeswara 41. Mulasthanana 42. Karivaneswara
43. Ekambaranatha 44. Shonachaleswara and 45. Sri Kalahasteewara.

The Linga in Dakshina Kailasa is marvellous in that it is one of the Panchabhutalingas, being Vayu Linga. It is majestically tall, imposing, radiant with a yellowish tinge, having the texture of Rudraksha, possessing wonderful powers of creation, protection, destruction revelation and disappearance, worshipped by Gods like Hari and Brahma, bearing the features of a spider, serpent and the elephant and has no parallel. The offering of a single bilva leaf is enough for Him to shower His blessings on the devotee. I

have imparted to you the importance of the river, mountain, the forest and the Linga in this kshetra.

Lord Sankara is ever present at a place endowed with the following four characteristics:

1. a naturally formed Linga.
2. such a Linga should have been worshipped by Gods like Vishnu and Brahma;
3. a river having its source in a sacred mountain with kshetras of Siva and Vishnu all along its course, bearing a single name from its source to its joining the sea.
4. a mountain containing excellent caves and adorned with beautiful forests and lakes.

A kshetra with the above mentioned four features is called Bhaskara Kshetra and SriKalahasti meets all these conditions. So it is the holiest of the holy places.

Narada ! I have told you that the Dakshina Kailasa represents the cosmic form of Sankara and the Vayu Linga is His individual form. Twice a year once on the day following Makara Sankranthi and again towards the close of the Brahmostava the idols of SriKalahasteewara and Sri Gnanaprasunamba are taken around the Mountain. The idols are well decorated and are preceded by Gods, sages and devotees to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. They take rest in a number of Mandapas en route and accept offerings made to them. These occasions are very auspicious. The Giri pradakshina is a highly rewarding experience".

Having enlightened Narada about the sanctity of the place, Sri Subrahmanya left for his abode in Vidya Saila. Sage Narada felt very happy, worshipped the Vayu linga and continued his endless travels singing in praise of Mahadeva.

Chapter 74 of Sthalapurana

Srimad Dakshinakailasaabhikhyam sthala varottamam |
 Punah prokta seshamukti vidhaanam kadhitam param ||
 Gnana vairaagyadam saakshaachiva saayujya kaaranam |
 Tasmaat sarvothamam sthaanam idameva muneeswaraah |
 Sthalastasyaitasya sadrisam na bhutam na bhavishyati ||

The sacred Kailasa of South (namely Srikalahasti) is the best of the kshetras. It ensures liberation by bestowing knowledge and renunciation to persons entering it. Ultimately they become one with Siva Himself. Therefore it is the most sacred place with no equal either in the past or in the future.

[SIVARAHASYA KHANDAM]

Chapter 36

SRI DAKSHINAMURTHY AND THE SAGES

Romasa narrated how Sri Dakshinamurthi enlightened the sages :

Long long ago, on the occasion of a solar eclipse, a number of sages gathered in the sacred Kurukshetra and began to discuss about Individual self, Supreme self and Universe. Great sages, Suka, Sanatkumara and Parasara were among those present. A pure Advaitin called Satyayagna expounded that Parabrahman and the jeevataman as well as the universe are all one and the same and the difference between them was only an illusion. The Sage Sandilya got up and with his flowery speech coupled with profound rhetoric emphasised that duality was the

real truth and that advaita theory was only misleading others. Satyayagna would not agree with the argument put forth by Sandilya but lacked the ability to contradict him. Supreme reality, being beyond the reach of words and senses had only to be realised by deep meditation under the guidance of a sadguru. So Satyayagna simply closed his ears and walked out. Suka, Sanatkumara and Parasara and the other sages were convinced that Dvaita or the dual principle was the correct one and heckled Satyayagna by clapping their hands. They also began to preach Dvaita philosophy (dualism) to others.

Lord Virinchi, the creator, wanted to guide the people correctly, came to Varanasi, and began to convert the sages there as advaitins. Suka and the other two sages also met the Lord at Varanasi and sought knowledge about Reality - whether it was one or dual. The Lord said, "Oh sages! Just as a person with disease of eye-sight perceives one moon as two, due to their optical illusion, people think that the duality they see as real. This illusion is caused only by Saiva maya". The Lord declared that Advaita was the correct one, the realisation of which alone would enable one to get release from the cycle of births and deaths and to attain moksha. That would be possible only with great practice, renunciation and grace of Lord Siva. Sought for further guidance, they were directed to go to Dakshina Kailasa and worship Sri Kalahasteswara, who could enlighten them.

The sages accordingly went to SriKalahasti, took bath in the sacred river, Swarnamukhi, worshipped the unique Vayu Linga and performed penance. In due course SriKalahasteswara appeared before them as Dakshinamurthi seated under a huge banyan tree. His jata makuta was impressive. His magnificent head radiated serene tranquility and transcendental aloofness. A gentle smile was lingering on the crimson lips of His handsome face. His half open eyes were fixed on the tip of his nose. He held an axe and an antelope in his upper hands. The

lower right hand was raised in the gesture of teaching in silence (Chinh Mudra) while the corresponding left hand rested on his knee. His broad chest indicated that he was holding breath in pranayama. The Murthi was seated in a heroic posture (Veerasana), His left foot resting on the knee of the pendant, right leg and His body straight as the stem of the tree. Under His right leg lay prostrate the dwarfed demon (Apasmara) of forgetfulness.

The aged sages reverently prostrated before the young Guru who had so gracefully appeared before them, and beckoned them to sit in front of him and meditate. The great Lord of Yoga, absorbed totally in transcendental reality, began to teach in silence the Cosmic Truth to the sages. Gradually and imperceptibly the revelation came.

Dakshinamurthi Himself represented the Supreme soul while the banyan tree, with its several branches, leaves, fruits, roots and birds stood for the created universe. The sages contemplated on the tree. This huge tree arose from a tiny seed and the seed itself contained the embryo. The tree was in an unmanifest form at the beginning, got manifested in the middle to become again unmanifest in due course. Thus the world and the various objects seen in it are not permanent. That which vanishes could not be considered as real. The Supreme self had cast its seed in Mahat to produce the mundane universe. Just as a spider weaves its web from out of itself and later absorbs it within, Paramatma releases and absorbs the universe from time to time. As the various pots and articles made out of mud are nothing but mud, temporarily bearing different names and forms, the jeevatmas are not different from Paramatma.

The very posture of the Lord stood for steadfastness and earnestness required of a seeker. His eyes fixed on the tip of his nose indicated that the search for truth should be directed inwards with the question "Who am I? Am I the eyes, ears, nose or other parts of the body? What happens

to me when the body perishes?" Such enquiries could only lead to the realisation of self. One should also practise yoga by controlling breath and observing austerities. Desire towards sense objects should be checked and cast aside.

The axe and the antelope conveyed that the three gunas that bind the soul have to be mercilessly axed and the fleeting mind held firmly in a proper position. The jeeva or individual soul forgets the fact that he is eternal and falsely identifies himself with the body. This false identification or agnana is the cause for all his troubles. This huge demon of forgetfulness has to be reduced to the size of a pigmy and firmly trampled. That is the significance of the Apasmara under the foot of the Lord. One should regain consciousness as to the true nature of self.

Finally the sages concentrated their attention on the Chihnmudra the tip of the fore finger bending to touch the tip of the thumb. Here was the greatest message for the beholders. Of these two fingers, the thumb, stood for the Supreme self while the forefinger represented the jeevatma. Normally the forefinger i.e. jeevatma is in touch with other three fingers namely the middle, the ring and the little fingers signifying the three gunas - Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. So long as jeevatma is associated with the three gunas of prakriti it is in bondage. Its link with the Supreme self appears to be severed and duality is preceived. There are several passages in the scriptures indicating that these two entities are different! But this duality has relevance only as far as the material world is concerned. So long as the individual soul is governed by the three gunas it cannot get out of the cycle of births and deaths. It cannot attain moksha unless bondage with gunas is axed down with the knowledge of self.

Viewed from the spiritual angle all this plurality is only an illusion. The entire universe appears as if it is in existence. The rope appears to be a snake until the truth is

known. Due to the beginningless ignorance (Anadi Avidya), this illusion is caused and it can be erased only by true knowledge. By the dawn of true knowledge the individual soul identifies its oneness with the Supreme Soul. It is nothing but the indestructible, all pervading eternal self. The forefinger which is so far directed outwards casts off its ego, bends and becomes one with the thumb.

The Sages realised and experienced the great truth. Supreme wisdom - the knowledge of Self- Existence (Sat), Consciousness (Chit) and Bliss (Ananda). The penetrating insight enabled them to become conscious of the absolute oneness of the universe and to revel in it. Sarvam Sivamayam.

Thus having received the supreme knowledge imparted by the silent commentary of Brahma Vidya from SriDakshinamurthi the doubts of the sages were cleared. The blessed three reverently prostrated before the great teacher of all the worlds. They installed three separate lingas close by and left the place beaming with wisdom and proclaiming advaita to the world..

Chapters 75 to 78 of Sthalapurana

Note: [As one enters Srikalahasti main temple, one's attention is arrested by the imposing idol of Sri Dakshinamurthi facing south. The spot is known both as Vaidika Peeta as also Agama Peeta. There are two tall flag masts for the idol one of stone and the other of bronze. There is a bronze (panchaloha) idol for the murthi which is taken in procession during festivals.

Gurave sarva lokaanaam | Bhishaje bhava roginaam |
Nidhaye sarva vidyaanaam | Dakshinaa murthaye namah ||

I pary to Sri Dakshinamurthy, the preceptor of all the worlds, the healer of the diseases associated with birth as well as the repository of all learning.

Chapter 37

KENOPANISHAD AND
SAHASRA LINGA

Sage Bharadwaja told Romasa that he was enthralled to hear the anecdote of the sages like Suka. " Now I request you to tell me in detail the cause for the pride of the Gods like Hari, Brahma, Indra and others" Romasa began to explain:

"Long ago Siva and Parvati fully decked with priceless ornaments started on their faithful bull to visit Sri Kalahasti. In the course of their aerial journey from Kailasa, Sankara pointed out the various Lokas like Vaikunta and described to Parvati the specialities of each of them. Happily conversing they proceeded towards Mt. Meru with wonderful gems. During their journey Paravati noticed various gods running hither and thither in great panic. On her enquiry, Siva said that He withdrew His kindness on the gods as they became arrogant. Consequently, the Danavas gained easy victory over them and drove them away.

Paravati taking pity on the plight of the gods requested her God to be kind to the gods because they were virtuous. In compliance with her request, Sankara cast his benign looks on the Devas who vanquished the demons in an easy fight.

The gods gloated over their victory and indulged in self-praise. They attributed their success to the might of their weapons. While Brahma extolled, the power of his Brahmastra, Vayu lavished praises on his Vayuvastra. Similarly Varuna, Vishnu, Agni and Indra boasted about the invincibility of their Varunastra, Sudarshana, Agneyastra and Vajrayuda respectively. This self-aggrandisement gave room to jealousy. The gods began to

quarrel among themselves. Grieved at this development Lord Siva took pity on them. By His grace, a voice boomed, "O gods, the cause of your victory does not lie in your valour or the efficacy of your weapons. It lies elsewhere. You have become arrogant and are unnecessarily quarreling among yourselves. To cognise the real cause and to subjugate your pride you all must go to Sri Kalahasti and perform penance meditating on Paramasiva. Then you will be enlightened".

The Gods wondered at the divine voice and decided to follow its injunction. So they all went to Sri Kalahasti, took bath in the river Swarnamukhi, worshipped the Vayulinga and established an ashram in a beautiful valley five miles to the south of the Vayulinga. There they installed a huge Sivalinga and performed penance for several years. At last, Lord Siva appeared before them in the form of a Yaksha; but they did not understand who he was. The gods ignored him thinking that his presence would be a hindrance to their penance. So they asked him to go away. The Yaksha reminded them the purpose of their tapas and informed them that he had come there to gauge the intensity of their efforts. With the increase of their arrogance, their knowledge had depleted. He offered to prove their lack of ability if they approached him one by one. He stood at a distance.

First and foremost, the Fire-God approached the intruder. The spirit asked him who he was, and Agni replied, "I am Agni, the omniscient". "What power resides in such as you?" asked the spirit. "Why, I can burn up everything, What ever there is on earth" replied Agni. The Yaksha cast a hay strand before him and asked him to burn it. In spite of all his efforts, the Fire-God could not burn it. He felt ashamed and returned to the camp. Then the Wind God was asked to come forward and demonstrate his valour. He could not move the strand even a little. Next it was the turn of Brahma whose mighty Brahmastra had no

effect. He was followed by Vishnu, Varuna and other gods, all to return unsuccessful.

Finally Indra came forward wielding his Vajrayudha to confront the Yaksha who had by then disappeared. A lightning flashed as Indra winked his eyes. Before him stood wonderously fair Uma Haimavati, well adorned with golden ornaments and smiling. Indra asked her who and where that Yaksha was. She replied that the stranger who was none other than Lord Siva who came to prove their weakness. She pointed out that the victory they gained over the demons was not due to their valour. She added, "It is He who impels the mind to alight on its object. The Great God is at the back of every form of power, movement and life in this universe. The most striking phenomena of lightning and the most insignificant function of winking are due to him. He is what illumines the lightning. He is what makes one wink. Because of Him the mind knows the external world and remembers and imagines things. Your victory was only a result of the grace of Siva. He is known as Tadvana, the one to be worshipped as the Atman of all living beings". The gods realised their faults and shed their pride and humbly began to pray slowly proceeding towards the cave in which the Lord vanished. The Lord appeared before them and assured that by their intense penance and deep devotion, their pride and ignorance were cut off and that he would look after their welfare. The Great God declared that the linga worshipped by them would be known as Sahasradeva linga and the teertha used by them as Shasradevatha teertha. The cave nearby would be known as Yakshaguha. Granting various boons to the gods, the Lord disappeared.

Chapters 79, 80 and 81 of Shtala purana

Note: [There is a huge Sivalinga with 1008 small lingas engraved in it amidst thick forest in a valley five miles to the south of the town. There are also the idols of Indra and

other gods close by a stream flowing there. This place is known as Veyilingalakona or the valley of thousand lingas.]

Yaksham prapujya paramam prapurnam

Yad vastu drugochara taam nayati

Tanmae Humae darsaya vastu divyam

Twam yami matah saranam Mahesi ||

[SRI JANARDANASARASWATI SWAMI]

I take refuge in Uma Haimavathi who has facilitated the knowledge of the infinite nature of the most worshipful Siva who manifested as Yaksha.

Chapter 38

SARANGA AND VISWAMOHINI

After hearing the story of the thousand gods tested by Yaksha, Sage Bharadwaja requested Romasa to narrate how Saranga attained salvation in Sri Kalahasti. Romasa started the narration :

Once upon a time, on the banks of the sacred river Godavari there was a prosperous village known as Viprakuta. In that village lived a renowned jeweller of precious stones by name Souravrata. He was a Brahmin who had earned fifty lakh sovereigns and had several good deeds to his credit. In course of time he passed away leaving behind his only son, Saranga. Saranga used to freely mix with pimps and courtesans and spend his time and money on harlots. While he was squandering his money recklessly, a few villagers of Viprakuta left on a pilgrimage.

After visiting several kshetras these pilgrims reached Sri Kalahasti where a king named Simhadwaja was conducting a spring festival (Vasanthostava) for Sri Kalahasteeswara. Various halls and arches were erected and decorated with festoons and flags. During the nights the entire arena was lit with numerous lamps. The idols of Sri Kalahasteeswara and Gnanaprasunamba were richly adorned with jewels and flowers and seated on splendid chariots. A number of musicians and dancers vied with one another in exhibiting their skills. At last a famous dancer by name Viswamohini who was surpassingly beautiful and extraordinarily talented entered the stage. With her artful glances and dexterous movements coupled with her melodious voice and rhythmic steps, she held the audience spell-bound. Even long after the performance was over people lavished their praises on her. The pilgrims of the village enquired more about her and came to know that she charged one hundred gold coins for entertaining her paramours. On reaching home they narrated their experience in the various places visited by them. But Saranga was all ears for the account they gave in respect of Viswamohini. He was infatuated on hearing about her handsome features and her dexterity in dancing. He at once discarded his wife and children and left for Sri Kalahasti with a lot of money. Securing a house close to hers he invited Vishwamohini and told her that he heard about her beauty and her ability in dancing. He confessed that he was a brahmin by name Saranga who was enamoured by her and requested her to entertain him every day. He agreed to pay her a hundred gold coins per day in return. She consented. For several days she pleased him by indulging in various ways enjoined in the Kamasastra. He considered himself to be in a heaven on earth till all his money was exhausted. When he entered her house empty handed, Vishwamohini mercilessly drove him out. Thoroughly disappointed, he went back weeping bitterly.

After a few days she visited his house and said, "O foolish brahmin! you should know that the entire world revolves on money. Even though a man indulges in bad habits he is extolled as the most virtuous one if only he has a lot of wealth. A pauper is shunned by one and all. For the sake of money people stoop to do any base deed. We particularly in this profession do not care for the handsomeness, age or caste of our visitors. We are concerned only with money. You have become old and yet you do not follow the duties enjoined upon you as a brahmin. Think for a while the stuff of which our bodies are made. They consist of skin, bones, flesh, blood and marrow. Our various organs emit foul smelling substances like saliva, sweat, phlegm and filth. We cover them with perfumes. Then why should you hanker after flesh. Ponder whether you have done any good deed so far. Death is waiting at the corner. Before it is too late you had better divert your attention from women to God Sankara. Now go and try to secure the means for salvation".

With her words, enlightenment dawned upon him. He repented his past. Considering Vishwamohini as his eye-opener he prostrated before her saying that she was his mother and guru.

Saranga went to the river Swarnamukhi and praying her to wash away his sins, he took his bath. He approached some of the brahmins who were reciting vedas nearby. Narrating his story, he requested them to show the way for his redemption. A senior scholar among them called Kailasanatha took pity on him and accepted him as his disciple. He taught him the most efficacious panchakshari mantra, forming the part of the Vedas as well as the various austerities to be observed. In deference to his preceptor, Saranga installed a Siva Linga called Kailasanatha Linga on the peak of Dakshina Kailasa. He worshipped it in the Vedic ways taught by his guru. He meditated on the mantra ten thousand times a day with ardent devotion for four years.

On a new moon day in the month of Vaisakha Srikalahasteeswara emerged from the linga and declared that he was rid of all his sins and offered him instant salvation.

Chapters 82 and 83 of Sthalapurana.

Lingaarchanaat paro dharmo Naasti naasti jagat traye |
Lingaarchanaat param srestam Na bhutam na bhavishyati ||

[SIVA TATWA SUDHANIDHI]

In the three worlds there is no dharma better than the worship of Linga. Neither in the past nor in future is there any form of worship greater than that offered to Linga.

Chapter 39

VARAGUNA PANDYA

Sage Bharadwaja requested Romasa to detail the account of Varaguna Pandya. Romasa started:

The city of Madura was once ruled over by Varaguna Pandya, a descendant of Sundara Pandya who belonged to the Chandra dynasty. He was a great warrior and ruled over his kingdom with modesty. Providentially a sage called Pippalada visited his palace. The king having forgotten his family deity Mahadeva questioned the sage as to the means of obtaining release from Samsara. He requested him to enlighten him. The sage reminded him that the king had neglected the worship of Mahadeva. He continued, "One can attain salvation by learning that Hari and Hara are synonymous. There is no difference between the two. The creation of universe and its preservation are caused by the powers of Hari and Hara. There is no distinction between Shakti and its wielder. But in actual usage there appears to be very little difference between the two on account of Maya (illusion). The Shakti of Maheswara is four-fold. The

first is the power of experiencing enjoyment and suffering called the Bhoga Sakti. The second relates to Vishnu with his daz. ing chakra. The power of anger in a battle field relating to Kali is the third one. The fourth represents Durga who wards off Durgati (misery). Bhavani is pure consciousness while Vishnu is predominantly goodness and happiness. The power of Bhadrakali denotes darkness as born of ignorance binding people with sluggishness and slumber. Durga denotes the power of Rajas or energy springing from thirst for worldly things and attachment. Therefore, there is no difference between Siva and Kesava. Siva is Vishnu and Vishnu is Siva and the names attributed to one are equally attributable to the other. No doubt the puranas extoll Siva in one place and Vishnu elsewhere. On that account we should not consider one as superior to the other. The same god is called by these two names. By knowing the oneness of the two you can attain salvation".

Thus elaborating Sage Pippalada initiated the king into the Pancha dasakshara mantra. He asked the king to meditate upon it every day. The king followed the instructions and ruled over his kingdom with equal faith in Siva and Kesava. As a result of his meditation he could visualize Sivakesava in his dreams..

In course of time the king came into contact with a few Buddhists and was influenced by their teachings. He was happy in their company and began to lavish money on them. In due course he discarded the mantra and his guru Pippalada by embracing Buddhism and learning the Skanda Panchaka. Soon the Buddhists extracted all his money and completely ruined him. By giving up the mantra of the fifteen letters, he became a pauper and by neglecting his preceptor he lost control over his senses and was on the verge of madness.

After three years, sage Narada visited the king who received him with due reverence and stood silently before

the sage. The Divine Sage cognising the plight of the king said that his misery was due to negligence. He added, "Though you are wedded to truth and have conquered passions; though you serve the elders and are kind to all beings; though you are well versed in sastras and born in a noble family, you have given up the sacred mantra and discontinued your reverence to your mentor. I freely go about all the worlds and I know a place which is very sacred i.e., Dakshina Kailasa where the river Swarnamukhi flows northwards. On its eastern bank is situated the wonderful town of Sri Kalahasti. A luminous Vayu Linga adorns the place graciously showering boons on devotees. To ward off your sins and regain your greatness, I advise you to go there. Considering your guru and Paramasiva as one you must meditate upon the holy mantra every day as instructed. There you will attain relief and salvation".

The king lost no time in reaching the holy place. As soon as he took bath in the river Swarnamukhi he regained his original senses. He established a Siva Linga close to the Vayulinga and meditated upon it with steadfastness. He worshipped in this manner for eight years. Pleased with his devotion Sri Kalahasteswara mounted on His Nandi and accompanied by several gods appeared before the king, on the third day of the month of Magha, Varaguna was overjoyed and praised the Lord in several words. The lord said that the king was purified from the sins acquired by the company of the Buddhists and by neglecting his guru. The king requested the Lord to give him darshan every day in his dreams, to grant salvation after his death and to name the town after him. Siva granted the boons and disappeared. Thereafter SriKalahasti acquired the name of Varagunapura. After discarding his mortal coil, Varaguna attained salvation assuming the very form of Paramasiva.

Chapter 84 of sthalapurana.

Maheswarevaa jagataamadheesware

Janaardanaevaa jagadantaraatmani

Na vastu bheda pratipatti rasti may

Tadhaapi bhaktih Tarunendu sekhare

Siva is the Lord of the Universe while Janardana is its soul. There is absolutely no difference. Yet my devotion is to Siva.

Chapter 40

RAJENDRA CHOLA

After narrating the story of Varaguna Pandya, Sage Romasa told Bharadwaja the anecdote of Rajendra Chola:

To the West of Tiruchirapalli there exists a prosperous town named Dharmapuri. In that town the people belonging to various castes lived happily observing the duties enjoined on them. That town was ruled by successive generations of Bhoja and Chola twins who ruled the kingdom righteously. Aswaroha one of the rulers of that great dynasty was a great devotee of Siva and had a generous disposition. He was a famous warrior and was renowned for honouring the brahmins who were well versed in vedas. He was blessed with a son by name Rajendra Chola who was well known as a warrior, a scholar and as one wedded to truth. He was also famous as a staunch devotee of Lord Siva. He was generous in making gifts to deserving persons. Above all he was ardent in his devotion to Javvantinatha, the presiding deity.

During the same period there lived a great yogi named Sivaratha well-versed in different sastras in a town called Brahmavajraavidhan in Kashmir. By his severe austerities he earned the grace of Lord Siva. Once a wonderful idea dawned in his mind. Discarding his gross body, he stealthily entered Swarga and collected few plants of red javvantika flowers transmitting divine perfume. He brought them to earth and resumed his gross body. He developed the plants

and with the fragrant flowers he used to worship the linga at Dharmapuri which since acquired the name of Javvantinatha. Only after worshipping with these flowers he would just take a handful of water for his sustenance. One day a brahmin gave one of the javvanthi flowers offered to the Linga to the king. The king was astonished at the colour and fragrance of the flower.

Prompted by greed he ordered his servants to collect all the rare flowers and make three garlands to be presented to him. Receiving the three garlands daily, he gave one to his eldest wife Chandrarekha, the second one to his youngest wife Kantimati and retained one for himself. While the king and Kantimati wore the flowers themselves the senior queen Chandrarekha devoutly offered it to the Amritalinga in the palace. The Lord was pleased and blessed Chandrarekha with a son capable of effectively ruling the whole world.

Being left with no flowers to offer Sivaratha refrained from drinking even the handful of water. Pitying the lot of his devotee, Sivaratha, the Lord became angry with the greed of the king. The east facing Linga of Javvanthinatha suddenly turned west. This was followed by a terrible dust-storm. Frightened by this unusual storm people ran helter-skelter. The senior queen Chandrarekha was spared from the attack. But many people including the second wife Kantimati died in the deadly storm. The frightened king Rajenadra chola fled northwards mounting on a speedy horse. The storm pursued him wherever he went. On his way he sought relief by worshipping Sivalingas at several places like Rishividya, Vrudhachala, Shonachala, Virinchipuri, Srivaraha, Vedapuri and Kanchipuri, but his efforts remained unrewarded. Providentially he crossed the river Swarnamukhi and reached Sri Kalahasti. The storm halted on the western bank of the river and poured dust for three days. Meanwhile the king learnt the greatness of the river and the kshetra from the local people. He also

realised that Sri Kalahasti was the most sacred of all the places on earth. He lost all interest in his family or kingdom and began to worship Sri Kalahasteeswara according to sastras. He selected Brahmavidya teertha closeby for his daily ablutions. As a result of his stay in the sacred place, his sincere devotion, and sanctity of Brahmavidyateertha coupled with the efficacy of past good deeds, his heart became pure. The Lord appeared in his dream as a yogi and enquired as to why he was engaged in strict austerities. The king replied that he was anxious to attain Sivasayujya and requested the yogi to indicate the path. To test him, the yogi said that he could bestow him the wealth of all the gods. But the king refused to have them and reiterated that he was interested only in salvation. In the same dream the yogi revealed his identity as Sri Kalahasteeswara and gave the asthakshari mantra and asked him to meditate upon it to acheive his object.

The astonished king felt that he had at last gained the grace of Paramasiva. He worshipped the lord meditating on the mantra as imparted to him by installing a Siva Linga near the Vayulinga. At last on the fifth day of the bright half of the month Chaitra, Sri Kalahasteeswara appeared before him and granted him Sayujya mukthi.

Chapter 85 of Shtalapurana

Yaavacha Vedadharmastu Yaavadvai Sankaraarchanam
Yaavacha suchikrityaadi Taavan naaso bhava nnahi

As long as the injunctions of Vedas are followed, as long as the worship of Sankara is performed and as long as virtuous deeds are done, there would not be any disaster.

Chapter 41

ANANDA TANDAVA OF NATARAJA

After hearing the story of Rajendra Chola with great interest Bharadwaja requested Sage Romasa to bless him with the sacred account of Yogi Nilakantha who attained salvation by witnessing the Ananda Tandava of Nataraja. Romasa was pleased to narrate:

Once there lived in Srinagar in Kashmir a noble brahmin, Somaka, who was well versed in vedas and other scriptures and an ardent devotee of Sankara. His son, Nilakantha was famous for his erudition in vedas and vedangas. He was gifted with the rare qualities of calmness and self-restraint and was always engaged in the practice of yoga. With the permission of his father, he undertook a pilgrimage and visited a number of holy places. In due course he reached Varanasi to worship Lord Viswanatha. After taking his bath in the cleansing waters of Ganga and worshipping the sacred linga, he met a number of sages listening to Devarshi Narada. Describing the sanctity of the various kshetras, the Divine Sage extolled in several words the merits of Sri Kalahasti.

Nilakantha yogi was very much impressed with the account given by Narada. He learnt that several sages attained salvation by witnessing the dance of Nataraja at Chidambaram. He yearned to have a vision of the Lord's dance at the holiest of places, Sri Kalahasti. Soon he reached the holy spot with enthusiasm, took bath in the river Swarnamukhi and worshipped the unique Vayulinga. He selected Virakshetra two miles to the west of the Vayulinga for meditation. He installed a Linga and created a teertha for his daily worship and ablutions. By consuming just a handful of water, he embarked upon a rigorous tapas. Possessing the virtues of *Santhi*, self-restraint, equal respect for all beings, non-violence and equanimity, he performed

penance aspiring to have the darsan of Nataraja dance. Five years passed. Pleased with his remarkable penance lord Siva decided to grant Nilakantha his desire. He summoned the divine architect Viswakarma and asked him to erect a suitable dance-hall with Dakshina Kailasa Mountain as the back drop. Viswakarma accordingly erected a huge hall with four entrances with walls set with gems and windows of marble. The pillars of the hall were studded with ratnas while the dias was rich with corals and blue diamonds. The steps were engraved with rubies and domes were bedecked with diamonds. The entire hall was decorated with festoons of golden leaves. On completion the hall was resplendent with matchless design. Viswakarma gave finishing touches and reported the matter to Paramasiva and left.

Then Sri Kalahasteeswara manifested Himself from the Linga installed by Nilakantha. He was accompanied by Nandi, Gnanambika, Hari, Bramha, Indra and several other Gods as also by several sages and scriptures that had taken human form. Nilakantha was thrilled to have the darsan of the Lord on the fifth day of the bright moon of the month of Chitra which was a Monday. The yogi prostrated before the Lord and recited several poems in His praise. The Lord asked him what he wanted. Nilakantha said, "O Mahadeva, I am not enamoured of celestial worlds like Vaikuntha or worldly possessions. I only want to have a darsan of your Ananda Tandava which will ward off sins and grant salvation".

Paramasiva agreed. Several gods and goddesses enthusiastically joined in creating the orchestra for Him. Lord Brahma well-versed in Bharatasastra had taken up the cymbals to keep time with dance. Nandi took charge of the drum. Vishnu with his mridangam, Gouri with Kahalika, Saraswati with her kacchapi, Indra with his flute, Bana with the thousand faced Dambara, Lakshmi with Bhastrika and other gods and goddesses with several musical instruments were ready.

Even as the orchestra was getting ready, Sri Kalahasteeswara began to dress Himself appropriately for the dance with minimum attire to better reveal His features and limbs. The Tripundra mark, the sacred ashes smeared with three fingers along the forehead, was prominent emphasising the triple form of truth, in thought, word and deed. The hairdo of Siva was picturesque. The jatas were intertwined with snakes having the red light of gems on their heads, tinging the moon creating a wonderful colour blend and signifying the removal of ignorance. Ganga's head peeping from the jatamakuta looked like a lotus flower and the streams like garlands of pearls. The Ganas were busily engaged in assisting Him. The shouts of Ganas were asking for ornaments and attributes to be brought and made available quickly. Kala fastened the tiger hide. Nandi tightened the locks with snakes and adjusted the crescent moon. Ambika, herself gave final touches and placed a garland of flowers around his neck long enough to reach his knees.

Nataraja graciously entered the fully equipped hall in the twilight of the evening. In order to enable his devotee Neelakantha to comprehend the full implication of His dance He gracefully bestowed him with divine sight.

At the very sign of His brow, Nandi sounded the Naandi drum to start the dance of the evening. It was like the utterance of Pranava or Omkara at the commencement of Vedic chants. This was followed by the orchestra of veena, venu and mridanga by Saraswati, Indra and Vishnu respectively, Brahma keeping time with a pair of cymbals. As great exponents of music, it was the privilege of Lakshmi, Saraswathi and Vijaya (Companion of Parvati) to join in chorus to sing to the accompaniment of musical instruments. As Nandi joyously played the drum set on his lap, Nataraja commenced his dance with rhythmic limb movements. The bound up jatas loosened by the tempo of

His dance and a spray of water from the heavenly stream on His head sprinkled all around purifying the hall packed with spectators. This was followed by swift movements spreading jatas in the sky and scattering stars like jasmine flowers. The vigorous movements of His hands scattered a mist of sacred ashes almost creating the illusion of a white curtain behind Him. The sages and celestials reverently smeared the sprinkled ashes on their chests to cleanse their sins. The dance gathered momentum with the song sustained in the throat, meaning rendered by the hands, the moods (bhava) delivered by the glances and the rythm (Tala) marked by the feet. Where the hands moved, the glances followed; where the glances went the mind followed; where the mind went the mood followed and where the mood went there was flavour (Rasa) and Ananda.

And every movement or expression was highly suggestive to Neelakantha. Veena, Venu and Mridanga were held as consecrated by mantras to ward off poisonous thoughts. As he witnessed the dance, several mantras surged forth in his mind, " Namō Dundubhyaya Cha Hananyaya Cha; Namō Viroopebhyo Viswarupebhyas cha Namaha; Sabhabhyo Sabhapathibhyas cha O Namaha" and so on.

As Brahma and Saraswathi sung Sama Gana in a low voice to the accompaniment of Veena, all other musical instruments became silent. Light became dim. Nothing was visible except Paramasiva, who seemed to have withdrawn the entire universe into Himself. It looked as though Siva danced far beyond darkness in the effulgence of his own. He paused for a while. Only the words OM NAMAḤ SIVAYA were audible in a low but distinct tone.

In holy giddiness Neelakantha closed his eyes. He contemplated upon five faces (Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojata, Vamadeva and Sadasiva) and on the ashtamurthy form comprising the five elements, Sun, Moon

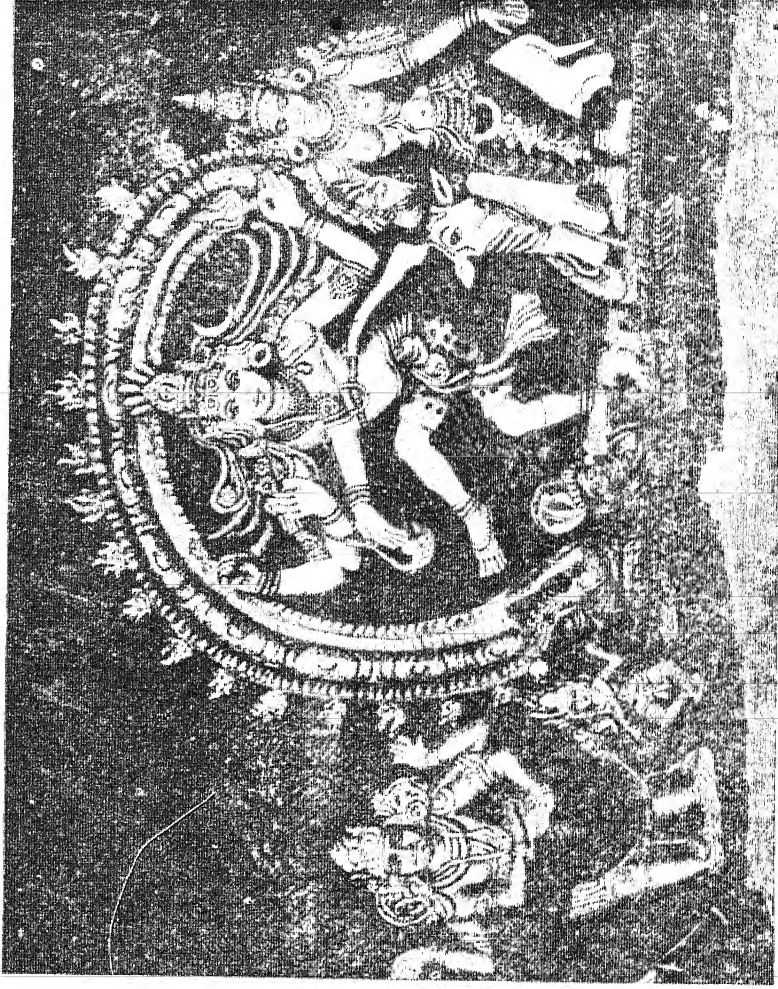
and the sacrificer as the creator, the protector of the universe. The five functions of the supreme unfolded themselves (1) Sristhi or creation in the damaru in His hand (2) Sthithi or maintenance in His lifted hand (3) Samhara or destruction by the poisonous snakes all over His body (4) Tirobhava a veiling or illusion in His matted locks, let loose in all direction and (5) Anugraha or release in the lifted foot pointed out by the lower arm. The circle of flames around the great dancer signified not only Pranava but also His poornatha or completeness. The yogi experienced the dance of Sabapathi in the hall of consciousness in the lotus of his own heart which vibrated with joy of such experience. He opened his eyes with amazement.

Gradually the lights became bright and one by one revealed itself. The hall, Nandi, gods, sages, ganas, orchestra; everything appeared to be recreated by the Great God, as He resumed the dance. The joyous Tandava of Nataraja with His head adroned by the Crescent Moon to the accompaniment of the sound of the waves of Ganga mingled with the twinkling anklets and the sound of the drum was splendid. Finally the performance came to a close with Nataraja sounding the drums nine times and five, desirous of calling up all evolved souls like Neelakantha and others for liberation.

The devotee was thrilled on witnessing the soul stirring scintillating and purifying dance of the Lord. His joy knew no bounds. He bowed before the Lord and requested Him, to be ever dancing in his lotus heart. Finally Sree Kalahasteeswara blessed the yogi with peace and prosperity, assured him of Sayujya and vanished in the Linga established by him.

Chapter 86 of Sthalapurana and "Nataraja" by C. Sivaramamurti

Note: A few yards to the south of the main temple of Srikalahasteeswara, there is a mandap known as Nataraja



Ananda Tandavam of Nataraja

Rangasthala with the sacred mountain as its back drop. In this mandapa we find Siva as Nataraja, as also Ganapathi, Subrahmanya in dance poses, Aalinganamurthi, Bhikshata etc. exquisitely craved out in the rocky mountain.

Sandhya gharma dinaatyayo Hari kararaghaata prabhutaanaka |
Dwano vaarida garjitam divishadaam dhrastichataa chamc! alaa |
Bhaktaanaam paritosha-bhaspa-vitativristir mayuree Sivaa |
Yasmin-ujjala tandavam vijayate tam Neelakantam bhaje | |

[SIVAANANDALAHARI 54]

I worship Neelakantha,(blue-throated) the peacock that excels by its beautiful dance, having the time of dusk as the eve of summer, the sound of the drum beaten by Vishnu as thunder peals, the eyes of the celestials as lightening, the blissful tears of devotees as rain and the divine mother Parvati as the peahen.

Chapter 42

KING CHAKRADHARA

After hearing with relish the account of Ananda Tandava of the Lord, Sage Bharadwaja was eager to learn the way in which king Chakradhara attained salvation at Sri Kalahasti. Romasa commenced his narration thus :

The kingdom of Madura was once ruled by a renowned warrior-king named Chakradhara, the son of Vajrakirita. He possessed the four- fold army consisting of the brigades of elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers. The king ruled over his subjects with love and affection as a father to his children. He had no sons. But he was happy with his two daughters, Amritalata and Kantimati. As goodness would have it, these two daughters were very much devoted to Lord Siva. After some years the king came into close contact with a few hypocrites feigning Vaishnaism. Due to their influence King Chakradhara set

forth on a conquering spree with the help of his invincible four-fold army. In spite of his valour and the might of his army he was unable to gain victory anywhere. Proceeding westward clockwise, he finally reached the south eastern vicinity of Malaya mountain. As soon as he entered the hermitage of sage Agastya, the consort of Lopamudra, he had a strange experience. Regaining some peace of mind the king approached the sage, prostrated before him and occupied a seat offered by the sage. In all humility the king told him the failure of his exploits. He said, "Though I have unparalleled strength supported by my mighty army, I have been facing defeat after defeat. I have a lot of wealth and other accessories, but no peace of mind. Kindly be my friend, guide and philosopher and guide me. I take refuge in you".

The sage was kindly disposed and said, "O king, I will explain the reason for your failure in war and your restlessness. In spite of many virtuous qualities, instead of taking the advice of noble persons you flaunted and committed sinful deeds. Your association with unscrupulous persons had resulted in your present plight. You believed in heretics and unscrupulously discarded the worship of Lord Siva. Even now you continue to revel in the company of those pretenders. The people of this group are materialists opposed to right conduct and are enemies of the Great God. They possess the base qualities of desire, wrath and greed. They are full of pride and self-conceit and their devotion to Vishnu is hypocritical. You have abandoned the injunctions of scriptures regarding the worship of Parameswara. So long as you hate Lord Sankara and His devotees wearing the holy ashes and rudrakshas, success will elude you. All the Gods dwell in Siva and by worshipping Him all the Gods are pleased. As you have neglected Him, all the Gods are unfavourable to you".

The king realised his folly and requested the sage to inform him the way for leading a pleasant life on earth and attaining salvation after death. The sage was kind enough

to initiate him into a mantra known as Sri Kalahasteswara prapatti. He gave the seventeen lettered mantra suffused with Siva Sakhti, *Sri Kalahasteesa charanau saranam aham prapadye* : I take refuge at the feet of Srikalahasteswara".

He meditated on the mantra. By the grace of Sri Kalahasteswara and sage Agastya and by the efficacy of the mantra, Chakradhara was purified, conquered vast territory and ruled over his kingdom with great pomp. He was blessed with a son named Rajasekhara. Chakradhara coronated him and renouncing all luxuries, his kingdom and family, he visited Sri Kalahasti on the fourteenth day of dark half of the month of Magha. He took bath in the sacred river Swarnamukhi, went around the mountain Kailasagiri and sat before the Vayulinga, the whole night reciting the rare mantra taught to him. He peacefully passed away by the next morning and attained the salvation by entering the kingdom of Kailasa, rare to be attained even by Yogis.

Chapter 87 of Sthalapurana

Anyadha Saranam naasti twameva saranam mama ।
Tasmat karunya bhavena raksha raksha Maheswara ।।

Oh Maheswara ! Protect me for I take refuge in Thee.
Thou art my sole Protector. Please save me.

Chapter 43

THE PRINCESSES AND THE YOGI

Sage Bharadwaja requested Romasa to inform him how the daughters of Chakradhara attained mukti in Sri Kalahasti. Romasa began :

As already mentioned the two daughters of the king Chakradhara were immersed in the worship of Sankara.

They remained virgins and spent every moment in worshipping Siva.

They set apart one of their rooms exclusively for puja. They would get up early in the morning and after finishing their daily ablutions set to work. While the younger one Kantimati collected various flowers and bilva leaves from the royal garden, the elder one, Amritalata was engrossed in cleaning the puja room, the utensils for worship and the idols. Together they used to decorate the mandapa and arrange the flowers. With single-minded attention they used to offer flowers to the various names of Sankara and Parvati. They also offered food specially cooked and fruits by way of Naivedya. They would close the morning sessions by lighting camphor and singing songs.

At noon they would receive reverently the devotees of Siva who visited the palace. After attending to their comforts, they used to listen to the experiences of the visitors. While some described the greatness of various Siva kshetras, others narrated the numerous exploits of the Lord. The sisters also learnt several devotional songs from them.

In the evenings they would again clean the puja room and decorate the mandapa and idols with different ornaments set with gems. To the accompaniment of veena, venu and mridanga they would sing in praise of the Lord. In the nights they used to get pleasant dreams.

One morning, Amritalata told her sister, "Dear Kantimati, I had a fine dream. A Siva yogi with clear marks of ashes on his forehead and the sacred rudraksha beads around his neck, appeared and informed me that he was on his way back to Sri Kalahasti. On hearing our steadfast devotion to Mahadeva he had visited us. In the dream he gave me the sacred panchakshari mantra. Extolling Sri Kalahasteswara he vanished". Kantimati said that she too had exactly the same dream. As they were so discussing their maid-servant Santa informed the arrival of a Siva yogi

at the gate. To their surprise they noticed that he was the man who appeared in their dreams the previous night. The yogi accepted their hospitality, revealed that he was from Sri Kalahasti, extolled the Vayulinga and initiated them into the Panchakshari. He advised them to visit Sri Kalahasti and meditate upon the mantra. He also offered them some sacred Vibhuti capable of warding off hunger and thirst. Instructing his disciple, Satyam to lead them to Sri Kalahasti the yogi departed.

Accordingly the two princesses followed Satyam to Sri Kalahasti. They had a holy dip in the crystal clear waters of Swarnamukhi and worshipped the splendid Vayulinga with bilva leaves. They installed Lingas in their names nearby. Thus worshipping the Lingas meditating upon the mantra as instructed by the Siva yogi, they spent five years. On a full moon day in the month of Margasira, they shed their human bodies. Donning the celestial bodies by the grace of Sri Kalahasteswara they entered the abode of Kailasa.

Chapter 88 of Sthalapurana.

Durlabho vishaya tyago | Durlabham tatwadarsanam |

Durlabhaa sahajaavastah | Sadguroh karunaam vinaa ||

It is very difficult to renounce sense objects; It is very difficult to perceive Tatwa; It is very difficult to gain self perfection. Only the grace of a Sadguru can enable us to overcome these difficulties.

CHAPTER 44

PADMASENA

Bharadwaja requested sage Romasa to enlighten him about Padmasena who acquired lot of wealth by offering prayers to Sri Kalahasteswara. Romasa consented.

In the good olden days, the city of Srinagar in Kashmir was flourishing with pomp and prosperity. This city was ruled by a king belonging to the Chandra race by name Yamadwaja. He had two wives of unparalleled beauty named Satyavati and Kanthimati. He had a son named Padmasena through his first wife Satyavati. That boy was not only dignified but also valorous. The son of his second wife Hemaprabhu was surpassingly handsome. The king who was enamoured of his second wife never failed to fulfil her wishes. He was prepared to do anything to satisfy her. He placed the kingdom with all its forts and treasures at the disposal of his second son Hemaprabhu. His first wife and eldest son were reduced to the position of slaves. They had to be at the beck and call of the younger prince and his mother. Satyavati was content to be in the presence of her husband. In course of time, Hemaprabhu was scheming to imprison his elder brother. Sensing this the king's purohit called Satyamitra approached Yamadwaja and told him, "O great king, you are well-versed in dharma. I am pained at the recent developments and have come here to counsel you. Being fond of your second wife you have discarded your first son, Padmasena who is endowed with the noble qualities of truth and contentment. He is righteous, well-versed in the laws governing the kingdom. Instead of bestowing the governance of the kingdom on your virtuous son following the traditions of rulers, you have made the second son wield all powers. Your action is fraught with grave danger.

"As your well wisher I would advise you to follow one of the three courses mentioned below:

1. You must entrust the entire charge of the country to the care of your first son;
2. Divide the kingdom into two halves and distribute it between your sons equitably.

3. You must send the eldest prince Padmasena to far off lands.

After careful consideration you may decide the course of action to be taken". The embarrassed king chose the third course and banished Padmasena.

To the distress of the eldest queen her son left the palace. The purohit accompanied him. After visiting several places, they both left for Varanasi. They took bath in the holy Ganga and had darsan of Sri Viswanatha. They camped there for a month, during the course of which they attended to the discourses of the divine sage Narada being given to the sages gathered there. They learnt about the great significance of Sri Kalahasteswara and the river Swarnamukhi flowing there. With great enthusiasm they reached Sri Kalahasti and offered reverential prayers to the Vayulinga after taking bath in the river. During their stay at the sacred place they met the sage Markendeya. In great humility they offered their respects to the sage and narrated their story. The divine sage remarked that it was to their great fortune that they visited Sri Kalahasti. He called Satyamitra aside and recognising his intelligence, he imparted the manner in which a Siva Linga is to be installed, the way in which the worship is to be conducted according to Saivapancharnava Chaturanga Vidhanam. The sage also composed a prayer~ to be recited every day by Padmasena. The sage asked him to pass on the sacred knowledge to Padmasena and left the place.

See Appendix VI

Accordingly Satyamitra and Padmasena took bath in the river Swarnamukhi, worshipped the Vayulinga and selected a place to the west of the Sivalinga for their daily worship. In the manner ordained by Sage Markandeya, Satyamitra had a Sivalinga installed by Padmasena and initiated him into Sivapanchakshari japa in the chaturanga way. After the prince settled down in the worship his

purohit left for his native place. Ten years passed by. On one Sunday, the 14th day of the bright half of the month Pushya Sri Kalahasteeswara with his entourage manifested himself before the prince. Deeply moved by the grace of the Lord bestowed on him, Padmasena praised him. The Lord said, "O prince, I am overwhelmed by your worship performed according to sastras. You will be blessed with an invincible army to the tune of a Padma (Satakoti) befitting your name. You will conquer many kingdoms and reach home to reign long over the empire. Your linga will be known as Sampat Pradeswara". Sankara disappeared. Subsequently Padmasena accumulated a large-army and wealth and gained suzerainty over a vast empire. He was welcomed by his parents. Recognising the might of Padmasena, his younger brother started helping him in every way. In the end, he entered Siva loka, the abode of Sankara.

Having narrated these episodes, Sage Romasa blessed his disciple Bharadwaja. He advised the latter to install a Siva linga and worship it with steadfast devotion. He reiterated the greatness of Sri Kalahasteeswara, the splendour of the kshetra, the glory of the mountain and the sanctity of the river. He added that he only gave a brief account of the sinners and sages who attained deliverance there. One will never be able to comprehend and narrate the full mahima of the Lord. Romasa remained silent focussing his entire thoughts on SriKalahasteeswara.

Chapter 89 of Sthalampurana

Bhishukopi sakalepsidaataa | Pretabhumi nilayopi
pavitrah |
Bhutamitramapi yo abhaya satree Twam vichitra
charitam Siva meede | |

Though a begger Thou grantest all desires; though a resident of cremation ground Thou art holy; Thy friends are fiends, yet Thou grantest (Abhaya) fearlessness; Thy ways are wonderful! I pray Thee, O Siva.

Chapter 45

SARVAM SIVAMAYAM THE OMNIPRESENCE OF SIVA

Saunaka and the other sages of Naimisharanya, after intently listening to the episodes of Siva and His Bhaktas who attained salvation in Srikalahasti as enunciated by Romasa to Bharadwaja, requested Suta, the great exponent of puranas, to inform them how and where Sage Bharadwaja performed penance and attained salvation. Suta, the pouranika remarked that the sages of Naimisharanya were very fortunate in attentively hearing the wonderful deeds and unparalleled grace of Paramasiva. He then proceeded with the final part of the series as to how Sage Romasa and his disciple too attained Moksha.

In compliance with the instructions of his mentor, sage Bharadwaja accompanied by a band of his disciples took bath in the holy waters of Swarnamukhi and worshipped the blissful Vayulinga of Sri Kalahasteswara. While he was meditating, he heard a subtle divine voice whispering to him, "O Bharadwaja, not far from here to the south there is Saswatakshetra which bestows jeevan-mukthi. Go there and worship me reciting 'Sri Rudram' forming part of vedas. Those that contemplate on the Vayulinga in the shape of pure camphor are sure to reach me. For the benefit of my seekers there exists a Linga and teertha. You perform penance there". Sage Bharadwaja was thrilled. Soon the sage accompanied by all his disciples reached the spot surrounded by hills. He took his bath in the clear waters of the tank near by and worshipped the Linga that spontaneously manifested there and Paramasiva appeared. The sage praised, "O Lord of Girija, I bow before thee. O Parameswara, I pray thee. You are the root cause of the universe. You are praised by the vedas and all effects emanate from you. You are the passive witness of all the

activities. You are one without a second. Knowledge shines upon me through your grace. Again and again accept my pranams".

Sri Kalahasteeswara was pleased and enlightened him about Lingodbhava (manifestation of Siva-Linga). Sankara was pleased and declared that the Linga worshipped by him and the teertha nearby would henceforth be known by his name and that all those worshipping the Linga after a bath in the teertha would be liberated.

After Mahadeva disappeared, Sage Bharadwaja having all his desires fulfilled, and having realised the self gained tranquility.

In the mean time Sage Romasa took his bath in the river Swarnamukhi, worshipped Sri Kalahasteeswara and Gnanaprasunambika. Circumambulating he stood for a while facing the idol of Dakshinamurthi. Between the two thresholds of the southern entrance (Dakshina Dwara), he set himself firmly in Padmasana on a deer skin laid over kusha grass. Holding in one line his body, head and neck gazing steadily at the tip of his nose, he controlled his mind and concentrated on the Lord. He attained supreme peace of mind and entered into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The sage perceived all creations, animate and inanimate in the Supreme Lord and saw Him abiding in all creations. He visualised Siva everywhere and also in himself. Finally the realisation came that he was none other the Supreme soul. His motionless lips seemed to utter, "Sivoham" and the temple reverberated with the sound of Sivoham. A bright flame appeared to pass from the sage to Sri Kalahasteeswara.

The great exponent of the puranas, Suta, concluding the discourse extolled Sri Kalahasteeswara and exhorted the sages assembled there to go to Srikalahasti and get all their desires fulfilled. Suta added that this wonderful and beneficial story should not be narrated to wicked persons.

Those who devoutly read or hear this book in front of the idol of Mahadeva or under a bilva tree will be healthy, wealthy and wise. They will also gain deliverance after their exit from the world.

Finally, pouranika Suta, revelled in the Supreme Sabda Brahma OM through the voices para, pashyanti, madhyama and Vaikhari. Finally he transcended sabda and merged with the Supreme Sudha Brahman.

Sivoham

Saravam Sivamayam

OM TAT SAT

Chapter 90 of Sthalapurana.

Na bhoomiraapo na cha vahnirasti |
Na chaanalo meysti nachaambaram cha
Evam viditwaa Paramaatma roopam |
Guhaasayam nishkalamadwiteeyam |
Samasta Saakshim sadasad viheenam |
Prayaati sudham Paramaatma roopam

[KAIVALYOPANISHAD]

The supreme Lord is neither earth nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether. Thus realising the nature of Paramaatman the one who dwells in the heart, who is without parts, who is passive witness of all and one above duality of good and bad - will acquire the very nature of Paramatman.

SRI KALAHASTEESWARARPANAMASTU

EPILOGUE

The Temple and Isopanishad

The three spearheads of Hinduism are the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavadgita* and the *Brahmasutras* each complementing the other two.

Upanishads constitute the concluding portions of *Vedas* and so are called *Vedanta*. The expression is significant also in the sense that the teachings of the *Upanishads* represent the goal of the *Vedas*. They form the basis of Indian Philosophy and provide inspiration to every captain of thought. Everyone acquainted with the *Upanishads*, has showered unstinted praise on them. For example Schopenhauer felt so exalted as to exclaim, "That incomparable book stirs the spirit to the very depths of the soul. From every sentence deep original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit." Great thinkers like Sankara have written elaborate commentaries on them. The *Upanishads* contain the essence of Hinduism's spiritual message and have guided and inspired greatest minds all over the world for centuries. According to the *Upanishads*, *Brahman* the ultimate reality is the soul or inner essence of all things, infinite and beyond all concepts. It cannot be comprehended by intellect nor can it be adequately described in words. Even those sages who had a glimpse of it were unable to find words to explain it. They declared:

"Ya to vacho nivarthante aprapya manasa saha."

Yet they laboured hard to explain the inexplicable *atmananda* to their disciples. The manifestation of *Brahman* in the human body is called *Atman* and idea that *Atman* and *Brahman*, the individual and the ultimate reality, are one is the essence of the *Upanishads*. This oneness has to be realised and experienced through the inquiry into the source of the universe and through the quest after the true self.

The manifestation of the world out of *Brahman* is likened to the ejection of the thread from a spider. Though the world of plurality has emerged out of the one inner self the latter is not affected by the defects of the former.

The first and the foremost of the *Upanishads* namely *Isavasya Upanishad* opens with the statement that all this, meaning the universe, is enveloped by *Iswara*. That is, the universe derives its substance from Him. It is also the shortest and sweetest of the *Upanishads* which gives a scientific and mathematical definition of the *Atman*. In just 18 stanzas it deals with the problem of the material causality of the world and the man's relation thereto, the nature of the highest truth and the difference between reality and unreality and between knowledge and ignorance. Speaking of the opening verse of this *Upanishad* Mahatma Gandhi said: "I have now come to the final conclusion that if all the *Upanishads* and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes and if only the first verse in the *Isopanishad* were left intact in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever".

The lofty concepts of the *Upanishad* relating to the individual soul, *Brahman* and universe are much higher than the spiritual level of the ordinary man. Even the commentaries of great thinkers elude the grasp of many. The message of the *Upanishad* had to be brought from the Himalayan heights down to earth and explained to the common man with concrete visual aids. The message came and a clear path for the advancement of the devout was laid in the form of a magnificent temple with many special features around the *swayambhu* *vayu* *linga* at SriKalahasti on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi. This temple stands as an excellent, silent and elaborate commentary on the great *Upanishad*.

Let us examine how skillfully the *Agama Shilpis*, with knowledge and devotion managed to accomplish the

translation of the subtle concepts of the *Upanishad* into a fine temple art by recounting its unique features. They are:

1. A *swayambhu* Vayulinga bearing the symbols of a spider, serpent and elephant.
2. A golden screen placed in front of it.
3. One of the oil lamps always flickering in the sanctum sanctorum.
4. Bhakta Kannappa being given precedence and prominence.
5. An idol of Sungod in front of the linga facing it.
6. Devi being named as Gnanaprasunamba or flower of knowledge.
7. The idol of Sri Dakshinamurthi right at the main entrance.
8. The idol of Patala Vinayaka deep in a basement chamber.
9. The outer Gopura leading us northwards.

In the *Upanishad* imagery and symbolism based on the vedic hymns were freely employed and the builders of the temple faithfully retained this symbolic expression in explaining the philosophical theories.

The invocation Mantra and the first Mantra boldly declare the great truth of vedantic conclusions over the theme of transcendental infinite and its relationship with the finite. All that, whatsoever moves in this Universe is prebaved by the Lord.

"Isavasyam idam sarvam Yatkim cha jagatyam jagat"

Yatkim Cha = Whatsoever; *Jagatyam* = on earth; *Jagat* = all that moves.

The perennial river Swarnamukhi is flowing always like the very endless stream of life and on its banks as one looks forward or backward, up or down, one sees so many lingas:-

1. *Swayambhus* like the Vayu linga, Kasi Visweswara, Neelakanteswara, Manikanteswara, Nageswara and Vijayeswara.
2. Those installed by Gods like Brahma (Panchamukheswara), Yama, Surya, Chitragupta, Sri Rama and Parvathi.
3. Those installed by great rishis like Veda Vyasa. Suka, Vasishtha and Bharadwaja.
4. By great devotees like Kannappa, Akkanna, Madanna etc.
5. Thandava siva, Nataraja, Mrityunjaya, Kalabhirava, Ashtothara linga, Sahasra Linga, Kala Bhirava, Veera Bhadra, Nandikeswara and Chandikeswara are present here. The mountains, mandapaas. Gopuras, Vimanas, walls or pillars whatever you see, you see only Iswara. Everything is enveloped by His radiance.

The words "*Tena tyaktena*" used in the first verse are indicative of knowledge or *gnana*. The Parameswari of this place bears the name Gnanaprasunamba and it is only through her grace, one can realise the *Gneya* namely Iswara. Prasuna means flower and one requires the blessing of the thousand petalled flower of knowledge namely Gnanaprasunamba to realise the ultimate truth. It is for this reason Abhisheka, Puja, Neivedya etc. are first offered to the Devi. While *Gnana* has been compared in the Bhagavadgita to fire, boat, sword, *Tapas*, *Yagna*, sun, light etc., in Kalahasti, *Gnana* is more aptly compared to a flower.

The words "*Kurvanneveha Karmani*" used in the second verse indicate Karma Yoga and word "*Nare*" in *Na Karma lipyate Nare* in the same verse brings to our mind Arjuna, the hero of Mahabharata. Arjuna was reborn as Kannappa who became a *Karma Yogi* faithfully following the path of *Nishkama Karma* as taught by Lord Krishna in Bhagavadgita. We see a full sized idol, with a Kireeta and Gandiva

majestically standing with the firm determination that death in the discharge in one's own *Dharma* will bring *Sreyas*. He is also allotted an elevated place on the hill overlooking the temple. He is given priority in worship. Even the *Dhawajarohana* of Kannappa is celebrated on a day prior to that of SriKalahasteeswara at the time of *Brahmotsava*. The second verse has thus been excellently expounded.

The third verse refers to "*Asurya nama te loka*" enveloped in blinding darkness into which shall pass whatsoever people slay the self and they are caught in the stream of life and death. The ignorant people who forget the ever present self are referred to as "slayers of self". We have the story of Narkeera and what he had done was nothing but slaying of self.

The fourth and the fifth verses can be translated as below:

The Self is motionless, one swifter than the mind; the Gods do not reach it as it speeds ahead of them; it overtakes others that run, though itself standing still; by it *Matarishvan* (the all pervading air) supports the activities of all the living beings. (The element water).

The Atman moves and it moves not. It is far and it is near. It is within all this and it is also outside all this.

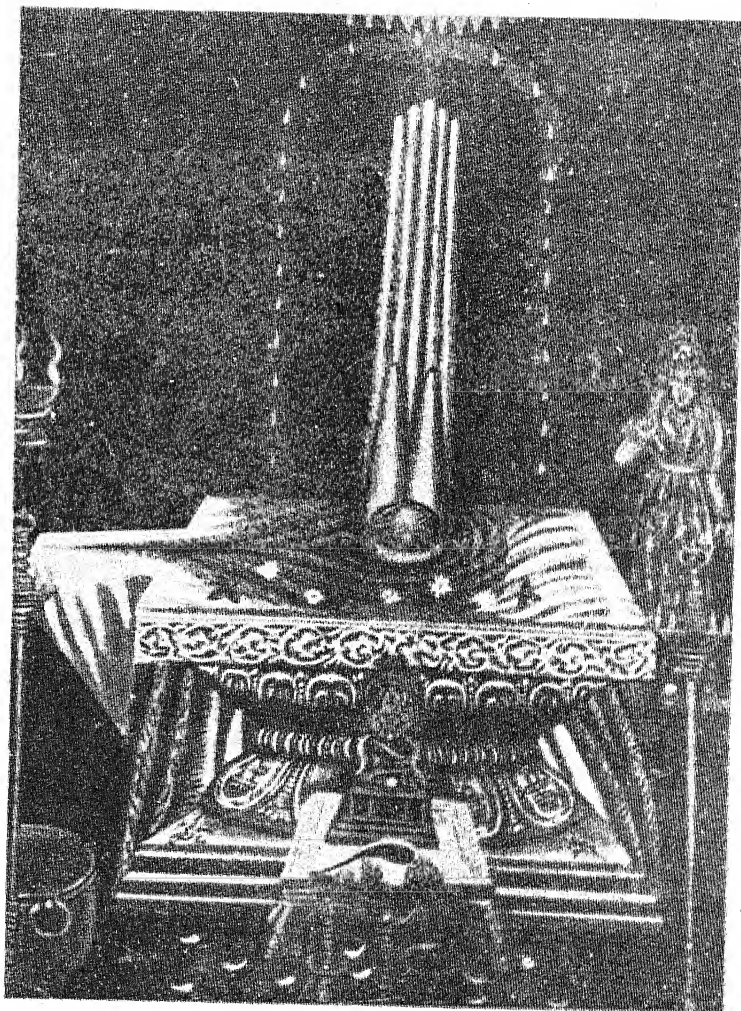
These two verses give in matchless words the description of the Supreme in terms of its qualities. *Anejadekam manaso javeeyo..... Tadhavatho-anyan-athyaethi thistat* ----- the meaning of these very difficult thoughts reveals itself when one stands before the Vayu Linga. Atman or Self is motionless as it is all-pervasive and it is swifter than mind for the Reality is already there by the time our thoughts could reach the spot. By denying motion and asserting speed, the Rishis are explaining the magnitude and implications of the first mantra, *Isavasyam*. The Self, like Vayu (air), is not only all pervasive but also the very substance and dynamism in all movements and the very

force behind every activity. The same idea has been more vividly explained by the closing line of the fourth stanza, *thasmin apo Matharishwa dadhati*.

Matharishva means Vayu or air. *Apo dadhati* means "bears water". It is a well known fact that Siva bears Ganga on His head. Srikalahasteeswara is a Vayu Linga and there are arrangements for performing *abhisheka* from a *dharapatra* hung over it. As one sees the *abhisheka*, he realises that Vayu is bearing water. The term *apo* also means Karma while *Matarishva* refers to *Jeeva*. Taken together, these words would mean that all activities of individual jeevas are within the Cosmic Self. The wind, the active principle in all creatures on which depends the aggregate of causes and effects and into which they are woven like warp and woof is a sort of thread connecting the whole universe. Such *matarishva* directs the functions of things such as flaming and burning of fire, shining of Sun or raining of clouds. The intricate meaning of the *Upanishadic Mantra* is made explicit by the simple device of *Abhisheka* to the Vayu Linga.

Tadejathi tannei jathi, tadoorae tadwanthikae appearing in the fifth mantra are contradictory terms trying to explain the qualities of Atman or Parameswara. It moves, and it moves not; it is far and it is near; it is inside all this, it is also outside all this.

There are two oil lamps burning in front of the Linga in the Garbhagriha one of which is always flickering while the other burns steadily. The flickering lamp is the proof of the deity being Vayu Linga, as it moves as if kept in an airy place. Even the *Archakas* are forbidden from touching the Linga whereas it was freely touched and worshipped by a spider, a snake and an elephant as also by Kannappa. Thus it is far and it is near. In other words, it is not easily accessible to the ignorant even after thousands of years and is therefore distant from them. On the other hand, it is close to the *Gnani* who realises that it resides inside (*antah*) him. *Tad antaryasya sarvasya*. *Atman*, like air, is inside and outside all. Being



Sri Kalahasteeswara
Swarupam

extremely subtle it is inside all the universe consisting of name, form and action. Being pervasive, it is outside the universe.

The next mantras beginning with *Yastu Sarvani Bhutani Atmani evanupasyanti* declare :

He, who constantly sees all beings in *Atman* (his own self) and *Atman* in all beings, does not shrink from any thing. (6)

When to the knower, all beings have become one in his own *Atman* what delusion and what sorrow can there be to him who has seen oneness everywhere. (7)

One who sees all beings in Parameswara and Parameswara in all beings has no aversion thence. In this unique Linga, we can see the lowest of the creatures namely, the spider, the serpent and the biggest of the creation, the elephant. One sees all beings as Parameswara. Conversely, having realised His omnipresence one sees Him in all beings. With the *darshan* of Sreekalahasteeswara, a wise man can discover the unity. All beings, big and small, good and bad, are his very self leaving no room for delusion or despair.

The eighth mantra is typical of the *Upanishadic* literature which attempts at an exhaustive definition of *Easwara* or *Atman*.-- all pervading, bright, incorporeal, sheathless, without veins, pure, unsmitten by evil, wise, all-knowing, superposed and self existing. The Linga here exactly conforms to this beautiful immortal description: *Chukram, Akayam, Avranam, Suddham, Apapaviddham, Kavir, Maneeshi, Paribhu, Swayambhu*. It is indeed, very tall, pure, untouched, radiant and *swayambhoo* or self existing and it is the light leading the seekers to realise *Brahman*.

Mantras 9 to 14 beginning with *Andham tamah pravisanthi ye avidyam upasathe* refer to the blinding darkness in the regions below to which mortals are led by

Avidya and how they can attain immortality through *Vidya*. *Avidya mrithyum theertwa, vidyaya, amrithamasnuthae*. In this temple, there is a shrine of Pathala Vinayaka. One has to get down a flight of steps to reach the utter dark shrine. There sits the dispenser of all *Vidyas*, Sri Vighneswara, after whose darshan, he is elevated to higher regions and enters broad day light as if his soul is transcending from the dark chamber of ignorance and mortality to the enlightened regions of immortality. The seekers of worldly pleasures and material benefits through their *avidya* will be in eternal darkness while those seeking *Adhyatma Vidya* will be redeemed from the cycle of births and deaths. They will cross the portals of death and become one with the Eternal.

The strongest basis for considering that the tenets of the *Upanishad* have been adequately expressed in this Kshetra is provided by the arrangements in the Sanctum Sanctorum. The fifteenth verse reads:

*Hiranmayena patrena satyasyapihitam mukham
tathvām Pusannapavrinu satya dharmaya dhristaye.*

The face of Truth is covered by a golden disc; Oh Sun! set aside the covering for me, so that I, devoted to truth, may behold it. This mantra has been skillfully adopted in word and spirit by placing a full sized golden screen called the *navagraha kavacha* to veil the Linga. A few yards before the Linga and facing it is an idol of Surya Bhagawan, whom we invoke to remove the golden veil, the glittering fascinations of the world, so that the face of Truth (Eswara) can be seen. All that glitters is not gold. Unless this *kavacha* is removed aside, we cannot have the *darshan* of the real *swarooma* of the Linga. To obtain *Atmadarshan*, one should be able to see beyond the dazzling objects of material wealth that envelope it; and only an earnest adherent of Truth can have this *darshan* by the grace of Sun God.

Consequently, the sixteenth verse beginning with *Pushan* says,

Oh Sun God! Oh sole seer! Oh controller of all! Oh son of Prajapathi! Disperse and gather up thy burning rays --- I behold the glorious and lovely form --- He who is that Purusha -- He am I.

As soon as the seeker gets the *darshan* he jumps up with joy and exclaims: "*Namo Brahmane, Namaste Vayo, Thwameva pratyaksham Brahmasi*. May *Pushan*, the knower of all, be auspicious to me. Salutations to *Brahman* and salutations to *Vayu*. Thou, indeed, art the visible *Brahman*. I shall proclaim Thee to be real. I seek Thy protection." He revels declaring, "*Aham Brahman! Sivoham Sivoham*". Having seen this extremely blissful form (*Kalyana thamamyathe roopam*) he is filled with *ananda* and forgets himself. In sheer joy, he lapses into a transcendental mood.

With the dawning of realisation, the *Jeevan Muktha* entreats his *prana* to merge with the all-pervading air and desires his body to be burnt to ashes. Exclaiming *Om!* he warns his mind again and again to remember what all it had done. (verse 17.) When the *Jeevatma* realises its identity with *Paramatma*, he feels the mortal body to be too heavy a burden to be shaken off. The *Jeeva's* envelopments such as the body, *prana*, mind and intellect (*Annam, prana, mano and vignana*) have to be discarded leaving only *ananda*. To shake off the shakles, he invokes the wind, fire and water gods. That his *prana* should merge with the all pervading air means that he should merge with the *Vayu Linga*, letting his body to be burnt to ashes. With these thoughts, he applies the *Vibhoothi* from the *Homakunda* on the South Eastern corner of the inner prakara, chanting:

Triyambakam yajaamahae sugandhim pushtivardhanam |
Vurvaruka miva bandhanath mrityor mukshiya mam amritath ||

He implores his mind again and again to remember the Supreme experience of his *Eswar darshan* a while ago.

In the concluding eighteenth verse he prays to the Fire God, "Oh Agni! Lead us on to wealth by a good path as

Thou knowest all the ways. Remove the crooked attraction of sin from us. We offer Thee our obeisance again and again!" The wealth he wants is the Empire of Moksha. The (*Supatha*) good path he refers to excludes the southern path. He desires to be lead by the *uttarayana marga*, that is the northern path which ensures release from the cycle of births and deaths. Likewise, the pilgrim to Srikalahasti pays his obeisance to Sri Gnanaprasunamba for the enlightenment he got by Her grace and has the darshan of Mrityunjaya. Finally, he sits before Dakshinamurthy and comes out of the temple through the Northern Gopura.

The *Vedas*, the very breath of God are eternal books of knowledge which contain fiery declarations of realised Truth made by Rishis who had tried to capture the Infinity in a web of finite words. By adopting a special style and technique, the *Upanishads* bring the Truth nearer to us. The very word *Upanishad* indicates that one has to sit near the Master at his feet and get at the great mysteries. It is quite apt that we sit at the feet of the *Guru* of *Sarvalokas*, the *Kshetrapalaka* of Srikalahasti, Sri Dakshinamurthy, holding a torch of flames in His upper left hand for our enlightenment. Sages like Sanakasananda and Sanathkumara got their doubts cleared by the silent commentary conveyed by His *Chinmudra*.

Likewise, Srikalahasteeswara temple is indeed a silent and salient commentary of the *Samhitopanishad*, Isavasya.

That is whole; this is whole; from the whole the whole becomes manifest. When the whole is negated from the whole, what remains is again the whole. Om peace, peace, peace.

*Purna madah purnamidam Purnath purnamuduchyathae
Purnasya purna madaya Purnameva-vasishyathae.*

Om Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi.

AROUND SRIKALAHASTEESWARA

Dakshina Kailasa or Srikalahasthi Kshetra covers an extent of thirty miles around the main shrine. There are a number of swayambhu and installed lingas located in and around Srikalahasthi, and worshipped by devotees for ages. Some of them are indicated below :

1. Ardhanareeswara or Satya linga : This is a swayambhu linga with two distinct features representing Siva and Parvathi. The lord gave darshan to Vijaya on the full moon day of Sravan. Mahasivarathri, full moon and new moon days are important.

Location : About 2 miles to the north of Srikalahasthi on the eastern bank of the river. [Chapter 31]

2. Bharadwajeeswara and Bharadwaja Teertha : On the full moon day in the month of magha the Lord gave darshan to sage Bharadwaja. This Teertha is also known as Sadyomukhti teertha.

Location : In a valley known as Lobhavi 1 mile to the south of the main shrine. [Chapter 45]

3. Brahma teertha and Panchamukeshwara : The Lord gave darshan to Brahma on the full moon day in magha masa. Also known as Kailasa teertha.

Location : A few yards to the South of main shrine. [Chapter 7]

4. Brahma Vidya Teertha or Suka Teertha : Sri Dakshina murthi gave darshan to sage Suka and other sages on the 10th day in the bright half of Chaitra masa.

Location: 1 mile to the south of main shrine. [Chapter 36]

5. Chandra Pushkarini or Prabasa Teertha : The Lord appeared before Chandra (moon God) on the third day in the bright half of Chaitra masa.

Location : Close to the Western Gopuram. Known as Prabhasa Kshetra. [Chapter 16]

6. Durga Teertha and Durga Linga : On the 8th day of the dark half of Sravan when the lord gave darshan to Durga.

Location : Teertha is to the west and the linga at the peak of Durga hill. [Chapter 11]

7. Gauri Teertha : Full moon day of Pushya when the lord gave boons to Parvathi.

Location : Sannidhi revu of Swarnamukhi. [Chapter 11]

8. Gnana Prakasa Teertha or Agastya Teertha and Agastya linga : 14th day of the dark half of Magha when the lord blessed Sage Agastya.

Location : Kontiraya Mandapam in siddhi kshetra presided by Sammohana kshetra pala Bhairava. 1 mile to the south of Vayu linga. [Chapter 8]

9. Harahara Teertha and Siddha linga : 7th day in the bright half of Magha when the lord gave darshan to Harahara.

Location : 3 miles to the east of the town in a beautiful valley. [Chapter 13]

10. Japala Teertha or Uttarakeswara : 14th day of bright half of Chaitra on which the lord was served hot by Japala.

Location : 10 miles to the west of the town in Vyasashram (Erpedu) [Chapter 32]

11. Kailasanatha : New moon day of Vaisakha when the Lord gave darshan to Saranga.

Location : Opposite to kannappa's shrine in Kailasagiri close to main shrine. [Chapter 38]

12. Manikarnika Teertha and Manikarneswara : 3rd day of bright half of Vaisakha on which lord gave salvation

to yogini Neela by whispering pranava in her last moments .

Location : Very close to the southern gopuram.
[Chapter 12]

13. Markandeya Teertham and Markandeya lingam : 1st day in bright half of magha on which the lord gave darshan to Markandeya and the 13th day of the dark half of all the months are important to worship here.

Location : In Mangalayana Kshetra about 5 miles to the south of Srikalahasthi on way to the valley of 1000 lingas. [Chapter 25]

14. Mayura Teertha or (Danda Teertha) and Mayura Natha : Full moon day of Bhadrapada masa when lord blessed Mayura.

Location : About 4 miles to the South of the town via Lobhavi in a beautiful valley amidst thick forest.
[Chapter 14]

15. Mooka Teertha and Mookeswara : On the 3rd day of bright half of Bhadrapada Devi blessed the dumb Bheema and restored his speech.

Location : Saktikshetra about 2 miles to the south of the main temple on the bank of the river. [Chapter 15]

16. Nilakantha Teertha and Nilakanteswara : 5th day of the bright half of Chaitra when the lord appeared before Neelakantha.

Location : Veera Kshetra (Urandur) 2 miles to the west of the town. [Chapter 41]

17. Padmasena Teertha and Sampatpradeeswara : Bright fourteenth day of pushya on which the lord blessed Padmasena with a mighty army.

Location : Kalyanakshetra two furlongs to the west of Srikalahasteeswara near Ponnalamma shrine.

[Chapter 44]

18. Rama Teertha and Kodandarameswara : 12th day in the bright half of Margasira when Guru Guha enlightened Sri Rama.
Location : Avidya sodhaka Kshetra in Tondamanadu village 4 miles to the south west of the town.
[Chapter 24]
19. Sahasradevata Teertha and Sahasra linga : In the form of Yaksha Lord Siva tested devathas and Devi enlightened them Kenopanishad.
Location : Dharma Kshetra, Yaksha Guha in the valley of 1000 Lingas five miles to the south of the town.
[Chapter 37]
20. Saraswathi Teertha : Full moon day of Magha.
Location: In the main temple close to the shrine of Subrahmanya. [Chapter 4]
21. Surya Pushkarini : 14th day of the bright half of Vaisakha when the Lord restored the brightness of the Sun God. The water of this Pushkarini is used for the daily abhisheka of Vayulinga.
Location : Close to the western gopuram of the main temple. Known as Prabhasa Kshetra. [Chapter 17]
22. Swarnamukhi and Srikalahasteeswara : Every day is important in particular in varsharithu when the star Agastya (Maitra - Varuna) is in ascendance.
Location : The river flows from Agastyachala, gracing Venkatachala and Dakshina Kailasa to the Bay of Bengal. [Chapter 10]
23. Tatwa Prakasa Teertha or Narada Teertha and Kailasa linga :
Eleventh day of bright half of magha when the lord gave darshan to the sage Narada.
Location : Near the hillock of Subrahmanya (Kumaraswamy tippa) in Srikalahasthi. [Chapter 34]

24. Thejovivardhaka Teertha and Trikhandeswara Chakreswara : Fifth day in bright half of Chaitra when the Lord blessed Sudarsana Chakra.

Location : In Muthyalamma gudi veedhi of Srikalahasthi. [Chapter 30]

25. Vajra Teertha and Vidveswara linga : Second day in the bright half of Chaitra when Indra was blessed.

Location : 3 miles to the east of the town in a valley called Panasakona or Pasuvisasana kshetra. [Chapter 18]

26. Veda Teertha and Skanda linga or Parasurameswara: Fifth day in the bright half of Magha masa. Guru guha and Parasurama performed penance here.

Location : In Gudimallam about 20 miles to the west of Srikalahasthi.

[Chapter 23]

27. Vighna Prasamana Teertha and Patala Vinayaka : 15th day in the

bright half of Sravanam on which Patala Vinayaka blessed Sage Agastya.

Location : In the main temple of Srikalahasteeswara in a deep shrine. [Chapter 10]

Only a few of the important Teerthas and lingas have been mentioned here. The distances and directions given above are approximate.

Appendix I - (Chapter 7)

ब्रह्मकृत शिव स्तुतिः

1. जय सर्व जगन्नाथ जय शाश्वत शंकर ॥
2. जय विद्यानिधे लोक सृष्टिस्थित्यन्त कारण ।
जयाजया समायुक्त जय कारण कारण ॥
3. जय मर्त्यादि विष्ण्वन्त जनकाक्षर मत्पितः ।
जय सर्वगणाधार जय सर्व जगद्गुरो ॥
4. इच्छाज्ञान क्रिया शक्ति धामन् वेदान्त सन्नुत ।
शाश्वतैश्वर्य संपन्न जय भक्त परायण ॥
5. जय सर्व जगत्सेतो जय कामविवर्जित ।
जय कालस्वरूपोरु कालातीत कलाधर ॥
6. पञ्चकारणरूपात्तु भिन्नाऽभिन्न महेश्वर ।
जय भेद्यस्वकोद्योग स्वमहिम्निप्रतिष्ठित ॥ •
7. सर्व व्यापिन् स्व प्रकाश सर्व भूत गुहाशय ।
कूटस्थ साक्षिन् सर्वेश पाहि मां परमेश्वर ॥
8. इति स्तुत्वा नतं शंभुः परिष्वज्य दयावशात् ।
वरान्वरय भद्रं ते मत्तस्सर्वेश्वरात् विधे ॥

Appendix II - (Chapter 12)

अगस्त्य प्रोक्त शिव स्तुतिः

1. स्वाधीन शक्तिलब कल्पित पञ्चकृत्यं
शुद्धेन्दु खण्ड सुरसिन्धु जटा विभूषम् ।
ज्ञानप्रसून कलिका कलितार्थ देहं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥

2. पाणि स्फुरत् कुलिश शूल कुठार घण्टा
खड्गगद्गुर्बुध वराभय पाशमीशम् ।
श्री संसृति प्रबल वारिधि तारकांघ्रिम्
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
3. विद्येश्वरैस्सततमष्टभिरष्ट दिक्षु
वीतं ललाट पुट संकुचितानलाक्षम् ।
कूटोच्चकूट करि चर्म कृतोत्तरीयं
श्री कालहास्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
4. क्षोणीरथं रवि शशांक रथाङ्गमब्ज
भूसारथिं श्रुतिहयं हरि वह्नि बाणम् ।
कोदण्ड तूण गुणरुक्मधरादिशेषं
श्री कालहास्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
5. विश्वाधिकं हरि विरिञ्चि नुतापदानम्
पश्वायिताखिल जगत्पति मद्धितीयम् ।
आनन्द सिन्धुमखिल श्रुति तत्त्व सारं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
6. श्रीमन्मुरवाम्बुज वराट निभानलाक्षं
शुद्धं भगाक्षहर मक्षरमात्म तत्त्वम् ।
अप्राकृताकृतिमनन्त गुणाभिरामं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
7. शंपालता शत समान जटा विलग्न
शंयाक बिल्व शशि सिंधु शिरः कपालम् ।
सृष्ट्यादि कारण गुणेश मयाक्षिकोणं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥

8. वाताब्जबन्धु शिखि वासव मृत्यवस्ते
यस्याज्ञया धृतभियः सततं स्वकृत्यम् ।
कुर्वन्ति तं कुटिल दक्षहरं क्षणेन
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
9. पश्यन्ति यं सकलवस्तुषु वस्तु सर्वं
यस्मिन्नपि प्रबल योग विशुद्ध सत्त्वाः ।
सर्वान्तरामलदृशं शशि खण्ड गौरं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
10. पंचाननं कनक लोचन पुत्रगात्र
शृंगारित त्रिशिख चारु कराम्बुजात्तम् ।
वक्षस्थल प्रगलदादिवराह शृगं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
11. आखण्डलोपलगलाभमशीत शीत
भान्वग्रिरूप नयनं नटराज राजम् ।
ब्रह्मेन्द्र विष्णु रविचन्द्र मयूर काल
श्री दन्तिराज सुभगा विजयार्ति नाशम् ॥
12. सुप्तिः समस्तजगतां प्रलयो यदीयो
वेदा भवन्ति शुभ निश्चसितं यदीयम् ।
विद्याभुवं विनत लोक विशेष कल्पं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
13. ब्रह्मादि पूरुष शरीरमजा गुणोत्थ
मास्थाय यः स्वयमनन्त विचित्र शक्तिः ।
सृष्ट्यादि कर्म वितनोति न सादनस्तं
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥

14. नित्य प्रबोध सुख सद्गुणं निरस्त
दोषं निषादवर लोचन चिह्नितास्यम् ।
मन्दस्मितं स्फुटितशत्रुपुरं क्षणेन
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
15. श्री भीत विष्णुमुख देवकुलं पुरायः
सर्वं ररक्ष कृपया परया क्षणेन ।
स्वीकृत्य तान्त महितामपुनर्भवाय
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
16. अग्निमुखं शशिरवी नयने दिशस्तु
श्रोत्रे वचांसि निगमाः श्वसनस्समीरः ।
विश्वं हृदंघ्रियुगलं पृथ्वी च यस्य
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
17. नित्यं विशुद्धममलं परिपूर्णं शक्तिं
सत्यं परं परमकारणमद्वितीयम् ।
आनन्दकन्द मखिलाभय वल्लिकायाः
श्री कालहस्ति निलयं शिवमाश्रयामि ॥
इति श्री अगस्त्य प्रोक्त शिवस्तुतिः ॥

Appendix III - (Chapters 13 and 33)

श्री कालहस्तीश शतनामाब्ज मालिका

1. शिवो महेश्वरश्चैव रुद्रो विष्णुः पितामहः ।
सर्वभृत् दिव्य कैलास शिखरेन्द्र निवासभूः ॥
2. अखण्ड बिल्वच्छदन प्रियो लूतार्ति मोचकः ।
संसारवैद्यः सर्वज्ञः परमात्मा परात्परः ॥
3. कालेभाजंजवध्वंसी सिताभ्रसलिलाप्लुतः ।
तेजोनिधिर्जगद्योनिः दिव्य मंगल विग्रहः ॥

4. अनेक कोटि ब्रह्माण्ड पिण्डीकरण पण्डितः ।
पंच बह्मतनुः सर्व मंगलालंकृताकृतिः ॥
5. अनादिनिधनः शंभुः सच्चिदानन्द रूपधृत् ।
हिरण्यगर्भ जनको ज्ञानप्रसूनांबिका पतिः ॥
6. मयूरार्ति प्रहर्ता च राम मोहनिबर्हणः ।
वेदान्तवेद्यः कालात्मा विचित्र बहुशक्तिमान् ॥
7. स्थिरधन्वा पशुपतिः सर्वतत्त्व प्रबोधकः ।
शबराभयदो गौरः शबरेक्षण भूषितः ॥
8. सुवर्ण मुखरी तीर वासी विजय मुक्तिदः ।
अगस्त्याय रमेशादि सुरोपास्यत्व दायकः ॥
9. वैदिकागम पीठस्थो मणिजालार्चन प्रियः ।
मणिकर्णो हरि ब्रह्मादृष्ट पाद शिराः स्वभूः ॥
10. मृडः पञ्चाक्षराकारो दुर्गा हेम रुचिप्रदः ।
अनन्त कल्याण गुणो नीला कैवल्य कारणः ॥
11. लिंगोद्भवो विद्याराशिः विद्यापतिरनामयः ।
पञ्चाक्षराभिधेयश्च सुभगा शोकभञ्जनः ॥
12. चन्द्र क्षय प्रहर्ताऽर्क महापापाब्धि शोषकः ।
आनन्दताण्डवकरः सकलामर नायकः ॥
13. भर्गो दुर्गा समाराध्यः चक्रप्रस्तुत वैभवः ।
नेता हर हरोद्धर्ता शक्र किल्बिष मार्जकः ॥
14. स्कन्दसर्वज्ञता हेतुः पंचधा भिन्न मस्तकः ।
लक्ष्मी विनुत वामांग्रिः जपाला भक्ति गोचरः ॥
15. मूक मृत्युंजयार्तिघ्नो वृद्ध ब्राह्मण वेषधृत् ।
माया शिवद्विजाकारो नारदामोद दायकः ॥

16. मार्कण्डेय हृदन्तस्थः महासंशय भेदनः ।
सनत्कुमार शुक पराशर सुपूजितः ॥
17. विज्ञात देव लोकोरू शक्तिर्यक्षवपुर्धरः ।
सहस्र देव संवन्द्यो नीलकण्ठमलापनुत् ॥
18. पद्मसेनक राजेन्द्र कन्या युगल सेवितः ।
तुंगो रक्षित सारंगो भृतचक्रधरो विभुः ॥
19. धर्मासनो वरगुणोऽभीप्सितार्थ प्रदायकः ।
नित्यो ब्रह्मपुरावासी देवर्षिनगरासिकः ॥
20. श्री विष्णु नगरावासी श्रीमत्पाण्डय पुरस्थितः ।
भीमार्चितः पिताभर्ता भरद्वाज प्रपूजितः ॥
21. प्रसन्न कालहस्तीशः प्रभाद्योतित दिङ्मुखः ।
कुमारः कालहस्तीशो गोविन्द नयनार्चितः ॥
इति श्री कालहस्तीश शतनाम्नाब्ज मालिका ॥

Appendix IV - (Chapter 15)

श्री मूक कृत ज्ञानाम्बा स्तोत्रम् ॥

1. ब्रह्मरन्ध्रसरः पद्म ब्रह्म नालायिता कृतिम् ।
शाश्वतैश्वर्यदां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
2. प्रकाशानन्द मध्यस्य पदवी पद्मभाविताम् ।
विद्या निषद्यां विज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
3. वशिन्यादि वचोदेवी वार वारित पीठिकाम् ।
वसुकोण स्थितां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
4. दिव्य स्वकान्त्या विहित सिद्धि बद्ध महीपुटाम् ।
सर्वदा सर्वदां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥

5. मूलानल शिखा लीढ ध्रुवचन्द्रामृत द्युतिम् ।
श्रेयसे भूयसे ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
6. कामशक्ति लसत्कञ्जाकारे सर्वार्थ साधके ।
चक्रे चक्रेश्वरीं ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
7. शार्ङ्गि रुद्रेश्वर ब्रह्म चतुरंग्रीभृते मुखे ।
शिखि कोणस्थितां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
8. अनुग्रह तिरोभाव सृष्टि स्थिति लय क्रियां ।
निगमाश्व वरां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
9. विद्यां पुराणीं प्रकृतिं निगमां मुनयश्च यां ।
वदन्ति तां शुभ ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
10. सुवर्णमुखरी भाति यन्मुक्तालतिकेव ताम् ।
आनन्द कन्दलीं ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
11. कृशानु भानु शीतांशु कृत पीठां सुलोचनाम् ।
कुलाचल सुतां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
12. बिन्दुनाद महारूप कळाकलित विग्रहाम् ।
शक्तिं प्रणव वाच्यार्थं विज्ञानाम्बामहं भजे ॥
13. कामराजार्ण तद्वैरि वर्णार्धावियवोज्ज्वलाम् ।
प्रपञ्चमातृकां ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
14. मुनिभानु त्रयोरर्थनृपाब्ज वसुधा पुटे ।
चक्रे चक्रेश्वरीं ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
15. परा पश्यन्त्यादि रूपां प्रणव प्रतिपादिताम् ।
अष्ट वाग् रूपिणीं ज्ञान प्रसूनाम्बामहं भजे ॥
16. श्री कालहस्ति निलये कालहस्तीशवल्लभे ।
महादेवि महाप्राज्ञे मन्दस्मित मनोहरे ॥

17. जय प्रालेय शैलेन्द्र महावंश पताकिके ।
सुधा सोदरिके वाचि सुभूर्वह्नि विलोचने ॥
18. समग्र चन्द्रदिनकृत् ताटंकेश्वर सर्वदे ।
नीपकान्तारनिलये नित्यविलम्बादि सेविते ॥
19. नित्यैश्वर्यप्रदे नित्ये निरपाय महाक्रिये ।
महा कामेश्वरांकस्थे जय त्रिपुर सुन्दरि ॥
20. पद्मा पद्मासनवधू पाणिधूत प्रकीर्णके ।
कर्पूरवीटिकामोद कबलीकृतदिग्गते ॥
21. कुरुकुल्ले कुलाधीशे कोमलावयवोज्ज्वले ।
वसन्त कोकिलाराव वञ्चकालाप मञ्जुले ॥
22. वेद ब्राताश्च संरूढे विविधागम सन्नुते ।
वामदेव महातन्त्र वरसिद्धान्त दीपिके ॥
23. गलद्धानकपोलोद्यत् गन्धसामज वाहने ।
स्वयंवरे सुधासिन्धु सुभद्र मणिपीठिके ॥
24. नाद बिन्दु समायोग नव यौवन विग्रहे ।
विश्वात्मिके चिल्लतिके विश्व कलिमलापहे ॥
25. षडब्जकृत सञ्चारे षडब्जाधार नाळके ।
कुलाकुलात्मके स्वाहे कुलकुण्डविहारिणी ॥
26. त्रैलोक्य मोहनाभिरुच्य चक्रपञ्जर सारिके ।
निगमाभिनुते मोदनिर्भरीश तनूलते ॥
27. वेदान्त सौधशिखर विश्रान्त पदपल्लवे ।
वशिनी प्रमुखोपेत वसुकोणान्तरस्थिते ॥
28. श्यामले राजमातंगि शमितारि परम्परे ।
सप्तस्वर रहस्यज्ञे जय त्रिपुरवल्लभे ॥

29. महातालवनान्तस्थे मधुपान मदोत्कटे ।
महावराहवदने महा हर्यक्ष वाहने ॥
 30. ताराऽम्बिके तटित्पुञ्ज तरुणार्क समप्रभे ।
जय देवि निरांतके निरवद्ये निरञ्जने ॥
 31. निर्मले नीति सारज्ञे निरीहे निष्कलेऽव्यये ।
वाग्वादिनि महालक्ष्मि वरदे परदेवते ॥
 32. वाग्भवातनु तार्तीय वर बीजत्रयात्मिके ।
त्रिकूटे पञ्चकूटस्थे त्रिपुरे त्रिपुरेश्वरि ॥
 33. सुन्दरे सुभगे सौम्ये सुधा निष्यन्दि विग्रहे ।
गुणत्रयात्मिके गुह्ये गुप्तलोकपरम्परे ॥
 34. समस्त प्रकटे गुप्ते संप्रदाये निगर्भके ।
त्वरिते तत्त्वसुभगे स्वर व्यञ्जन पीठिके ॥
 35. एकाक्षरि रमे माये यमाद्यष्टांग देवते ।
सप्तमातृगणाधारे सर्व सौभाग्य दायिके ॥
 36. पञ्च ब्रह्मासनासीने पाशांकुशधरे परे ।
शिवशक्ति मयामेय श्री चक्रपुरनायिके ॥
 37. अन्नपूर्णेऽमले पूर्णे कलधौते कलात्मिके ।
अणिमादिमयूरवाभिरावृतेऽमृतनायिके ॥
 38. चतुः षष्टि महातन्त्रे शरणागत रक्षिके ।
महापद्मवनान्तस्थे जयदेवि मदम्बिके ॥
 39. समग्रमंगलाकारे शाश्वते सर्वमंगले ।
भर्गप्रिये भयातीते पशुपाश विमोचके ॥
 40. षोडशाक्षर वाच्यार्थे शिरीष सुमपेशले ।
नारदादिस्तुते देवि जयनित्ये जयानघे ॥
- इति श्री मूककृत ज्ञानम्बिका स्तोत्रं ॥

Appendix V - (Chapter 20)
श्री विष्णुकृत शिवस्तोत्रम्

1. यक्षराजमित्रमक्षि भक्षितेशुकामुकं
शिक्षितेभमक्षरं तरक्षु चर्म वाससम् ।
उक्षवाहनं वलक्ष पक्षवाहनेडितं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
2. दक्षशिक्षणे विचक्षणं भगाक्षहारिणं
रक्षिताऽखिलं कटाक्ष लेशतः क्षमारथम् ।
भिक्षुमादिमम् क्षपादि नीति नर्तनक्षमं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
3. शीतभानु भानु चित्रभानु लोचनं मणी
सानु नन्दसूनु सुन्दर स्वहस्त सारसम् ।
शेषभूषणं विषाशनं निषाद रूपिणं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
4. कालरूपिणं कलानिधिं महत्कलं
फाललोचनानलोरू कील लीढविष्टपम् ।
शूल लीन नील नीरवाह मत्कलेबरं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
5. लोककारणं विशोकमेक मेक संपदम्
शूलवज्रनाथ पाश खड्ग घंटिकादिभिः ।
अंकितं सुवर्णवल्लि यज्ञ सूत्रमीश्वरं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
6. भूतिभूषणं सुधा सितासगन्धभाषणं
दूषणादि भीषणोरु मोह मूल हारिणम् ।
कामिनी मणीमयार्धकायमायतेक्षणं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥

7. नित्य शुद्ध बुद्ध मुक्त सत्य ख स्वरूपिणं
शुद्धचित्त भक्त दत्त नित्य सर्व संपदम् ।
सेतु मस्तकारणं पुराणमागमस्तुतं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
 8. तातखंडन प्रचण्ड चण्ड नाम तादृश
प्रदत्त नैज संपदं सदञ्चितं चिदम्बुधिम् ।
स्वप्रभा दिशा विशाल चेलमम्बराकृतिं
यामि यामिनीश शेखरं सदा सदाशिवम् ॥
- इति श्री विष्णुकृत शिवस्तोत्रम् संपूर्ण ।

Appendix VI - (Chapter 44)

मार्कण्डेय कृत शिवस्तोत्रम्

1. त्वत्पादभक्तिलव लाभ विधूत पाप
भक्ताऽखिलार्थं कृपार्द्र विलोचनाय ।
कालान्तकाय कवये सकल श्रुतीनां
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
2. फालाक्षि काल लवदग्ध पुरत्रयाय
भागीरथी विधिशिरः शशि शेखराय ।
भस्मांग राग फणिभूषण भूषिताय
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
3. एकाद्वयाय यजमान शशांक भानु
भू तोय वह्नि पवमान ख मूर्ति भाज ।
लोकस्थिति प्रभव भंगद लोचनाय
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥

4. त्रय्यन्तकल्प विटपादि नव प्रवाल
शंकास्पदांघ्रि युगलाय गुणास्पदाय ।
नित्याय निस्तुलपवित्र यशोभराय
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
5. मायां मदाश्रय भवद्विषयामनर्थ
संपादनाय सगुणां जगतां त्रयाणाम् ।
तां वारयामल वशीकृतमाय तुभ्यं
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
6. मां पालय त्वमपि यद्गुण योग सिद्ध
देहोऽसि हन्त विततामल बोधरूपः ।
तस्मादतन्निरसन प्रतिम स्वधाम्ने
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
7. गन्धर्व यक्ष सुर किन्नर गीयमान
नानाविधोरु यशसे गुरवे गुरूणाम् ।
वाणी रमाधव मुखामर सेविताय
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
8. भूदार श्रृंग कमठाऽनिमिषाक्षि नार -
सिंह त्वगादि परि चिह्नित विग्रहाय ।
भावं भयं भव हर त्वमजाद्य तुभ्यं
ज्ञानाम्बिका प्रियतमाय नमः शिवाय ॥
इति श्री मार्कण्डेय कृत शिव स्तोत्रं ॥

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प्रार्थना

वन्देऽहं कालहस्तीशं स्वर्णमुख्यास्तटेस्थितं
यस्यालयप्रवेशी हि नाल्पस्य तपसः फलम्
“ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं” स्मारयन् यो विराजते
सीतारामेष्ठ दैवं तं कालहस्तीश्वरं भजे ॥

ज्ञानप्रसूनाम्बिकया समेतम्
ज्ञानप्रदं साम्बमनन्यतुल्यम् ।
पातालविघ्नेश्वर पूजितं तम्
नमामि शंभुं करूणाणवेशम् ॥

वनेचरणामधिपो हि यस्य
भक्तावतंसः शुभदो महात्मा ।
तमात्मबन्धुं जगतामधीशं
श्री कालहस्तीशमहं नमामि ॥

नागाधिराजश्च गजाधिराजः
तथोर्ण नाभिश्च जनाश्च सर्वे ।
थमर्चयन् मोक्ष मवाप्नुवन्ति
तं कालहस्तीश महं नमामि ॥

सभापती पाबनि वंश भूतौ
सुभ्रातरौ माधव नाम धेयौ ।
श्री कालहस्ती पुर वासिनौ तौ
ईशस्य कारूण्य पवित्र भूतौ ॥

नागसुन्दरकृतं ह्येतत्त्र्यम् पञ्चरूपिणः ।
राजगोपालगुरूणा मोदितं अनुमोदितम् ॥